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THE

T R I A L :

OR, THE

H I S T O R Y

O F

CHARLES HORTON, Esq.

By a GENTLEMAN.

V O L. II.



D U B L I N :

Printed for H. SAUNDERS, W. SLEATER, J. POTTS;
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and C. JENKINS. MDCC LXXII.

THE
 T. R. A. L.
 H. I. S. T. O. R. Y.
 OF
 CHARLES T. A. L.



By a C. L. A. M. A. N.

V. 2. L. II.


D. U. L. I. N. I. S.
 Printed for H. Saunders, W. G. L. I. N. I. S.
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THE
T R I A L
A
N O V E L.

LETTER XXVI.

To the SAME.

 HAVE met, in the tenderness of this lovely girl, all my heart can wish for: Yet, Simpson, I am not happy. I receive the strongest and most satisfactory marks of affection from her: yet am not contented. We meet frequently unnoticed, and alone. She owns every thing that a virtuous woman should confess, to make the man she esteems believe that he is dear to her. "I was not insensible, though I appeared so," said she. "Your professions of fondness were pleasing to me, at the moment I even refused to hear them. I determined to reject your suit, had not my own folly ren-
A 2 - dered

“dered it necessary for me to exculpate myself
“in your eyes, and to endeavour to regain your
“good opinion, which I seemed to have lost.
“Educated in the school of sincerity, a duplicity of conduct I was a stranger to, and knew
“not how to support. It was the contrivance
“of a friend, who wished me well: But the
“consequences that followed the execution of
“the scheme were very terrible to me; and
“even now, though I have revealed the situation of my heart to you, I am thoroughly sensible
“of the impropriety and injustice of my proceedings. Tempted by a passion which I have
“a right to believe sincere, though very unfortunate, you are ready to forget your rank and
“station in life, and to throw yourself away upon a poor girl, who has been all her life a
“pendant upon your father, and has no other
“fortune or honours to bring you, than an untainted innocence, and—” she stopped.

“And what else? thou beloved of my heart!
“complete the sentence, and my happiness.”

“And too great a partiality in your favour,
“for her own happiness.”

“Not so,” my charming girl: “it cannot be
“too great, when it is mutual—when it is returned.”

I proceed to invalidate her scruples, to banish her doubts, and to reconcile her to herself; and have the pleasure of succeeding. We part more happy and more delighted with each other than we meet. Why am I not happy then, you will ask me? I, alas! have fulfilled your prediction! You told me my suspicious temper would create my misery;—it does at this moment—

* *Hæret lateri lethalis arundo.*

With that apparent sincerity and innocence, yet, has she not confessed, that she disguised her sentiments? Did she not acknowledge that her smiles were bestowed on Webster, to make a trial of my affection for her? Is she not a woman? And have I not a sufficient acquaintance with the sex not to trust them too far, without knowing them thoroughly? My reason sometimes tells me, that I am arguing upon false principles: that she, charming maid, is truth and honour itself: that she acted on the best, the most generous foundation. But prejudice replies, that she made a trial of my passion for her, by apparently preferring a rival to me: that I have no sure grounds to go on: that this may be only a deception, as well as the other step she took. But affection, the tenderness I really possess for her, came to her aid, and represented the trouble and uneasiness she would be reduced to, should I take any step that my wayward, sickly fancy should suggest to me, to satisfy my idle curiosity. How could I bear to see her in pain, or unhappy, for whom I would sacrifice my life, if it would procure her pleasure?—"It will be but a transitory pain," said I, "and it will procure her, if she loves me, permanent happiness. But her peace will be destroyed, and her reputation blasted, whether she is criminal or not. Then I will not make her unhappy, or give her the smallest cause for trouble, even for a moment." These reflections have employed my

* The fatal arrow sticks in my side.

thoughts since I wrote to you last: they have prevented my rest: continually ruminating on my situation, I formed this resolution to devote myself entirely to the study of making her blessed, as far as in my power. I returned from an agreeable ride, during which my lovely Harriet was the sole object of my cogitations: returned with an heart fraught with love and joy, and was as impatient to see the dear girl, as if I had been absent a twelvemonth from her. Her eyes welcomed me home. The gentle blush, that but just increased the vermilion of her cheeks, hardly visible to a less interested eye than mine, fully evinced how much rejoiced she was to see me. I was not behind-hand in returning those testimonies of pleasure and gratitude, which are intelligible to none but lovers. Never did my heart feel more susceptible of the tenderest passions: never was my bosom filled with more pleasurable sensations: I indulged my fond imagination with the prospect of such exalted, such refined bliss, as seldom falls to any body's share. How long I might have continued in that delightful reverie, I know not; but my father prevented my stretching it to any considerable length, by telling me, he wished to speak to me in his library. I followed him. "I want to
"acquaint you with what has happened since
"you have been out, Charles: it is concerning
"the disposition of part of my family; at least
"what I have made a part of it. You have
"heard me cursorily mention, that I intended
"to provide for Harriet in my will. As her
"ease and independence in life was all my wish
"and design, it is quite indifferent whether I
"settle her in my life-time, or after my death:
"but

“but I think, as a friend, that I should not reject any good offer that is made for her, especially with her own approbation.”—My blood chilled in my veins. I stammered out with a faltering and trembling voice, “No, certainly, Sir.”

“I think not,” said he: “My neighbour Webster has been here this morning. He tells me his son, who is really a very deserving young man, is fond of Harriet: that he has the greatest reason to suppose it will not be disagreeable that he should pay his addresses to her: and,” added the old gentleman, “the boy has asked my consent. I told him that I had no objection, if you and the young woman have none, and especially as I have heard you say, that you would give your relation a suitable fortune. Now, I came to know what you intended to do for her. I will give the lad four hundred a year; and we will agree what he shall settle upon his wife. The estate must be charged with fortunes for the younger children; and when they are paid off, he shall have all. Now, Charles, what do you think of this proposal?”

“I have no right to judge, Sir. Your prudence and experience, as well as your friendship for her, will direct you what to do.”

I knew not what to say, Simpson, nor how to act. Quick as succeeding flashes of lightning, did thoughts of various natures pass through my brain. Shall I throw myself at my father's feet, and confess that I did love, and am beloved by her? But did he not say, that she approved this match? She is a woman: and I am liable to deception. My father must certainly have applied

to her before she spoke to me, or he would not have communicated this matter to me.

"You are silent and thoughtful, Charles. Perhaps you may think I am wronging you, by giving this poor girl a fortune: it is true, it is not proportioned to her merits; but it will serve to make her happy. I intend to give her eight thousand pounds: that sum was saved from my expences in your minority. You will find, at my death, that my estate is unincumbered, and that I have not deprived you of any of your——"

"Hold, Sir, I beseech you, hold; this is more than I can bear to hear: I have no right to demand an account from you, how you choose to employ your fortune: I do not expect it: and have received too many favours already from your hands. If I could contrive to persuade you to expend it all, Sir, to give you pleasure, it would make me happy: my uncle's generosity has provided for me."

"No, no, Charles, that is not my notion. But what do you think of this match? I believe Webster to be a very good young man, and will make Harriet very happy, if she likes him. Besides, I should be glad to have her settled in the neighbourhood, to give me an opportunity of seeing her frequently. I have almost as much esteem for her, as if she was my own daughter. She is a sweet-tempered good girl, and will make any man happy: therefore, I think we had better conclude this match as soon as possible. What do you say?"

"I have nothing to say, Sir, but that you should do as you like best."

It

It was very well, my friend, I could say any thing, and was not instantly deprived of my speech, as I was almost of my reason. My father saw my confusion, and quitted me. I had taken up a book, and was carelessly looking over it, in order to conceal my agitation. He had nothing more to say : and we parted. Glad to be left alone to indulge my chagrin and concern, I ran to my room ; and locking myself in, began to consider what I had heard. It was to the anger and rage I felt when she had given the preference to Webster, that I was indebted for the discovery of sentiments, which, at this moment, I cannot believe to be real. Might she not have told me, she only regarded him as a friend, in order to elude my suspicions, and prevent the consequences of my jealousy being fatal to him ? She has given Webster encouragement : he has her approbation. Perhaps it is at her desire, that his father has made this proposal. I am the dupe of her artifice, and am his sport : he laughs at, while he triumphs over me. But I ought to be assured from her own mouth that she has directed this application to be made ; and will learn that from her, before I take any decisive step. Mr. Atkinson is arrived. My father is very much pleased with him. I shall have the pleasure to present you to a very worthy acquaintance when you come to Elwood. Adieu, dear Simpson, yours,

CHARLES HORTON.

LETTER XXVII.

TO CHARLES HORTON, Esq.

A MAN's actions, who has been so famous as I have been, cannot be concealed from the knowledge of the world: therefore I do not wonder at thy being acquainted with my arrival in England; nor am I surprized at the letter I received from thee *. It found me, Charles, at the old place, and, *entre nous*, I am truly rejoiced at my return to England. I acknowledge America to be a fine, a very fine, country. It is healthy: and there is something worth seeing in it. But I had rather enjoy one week of fog and smoke in dear London, with the concomitant pleasures, than bask in the sun, or enjoy the blue serene of any country in the universe. I am at last ordered home: and as I can reconcile my duty and my inclination, am so far very happy. The short days of winter so luckily approaching, with the eternal variety of joys that fill the long nights, and make them pass unheeded by, are the greatest pleasure to me. I, like Satan in Prior's Tale, "*Love more the fresco of the nights;*" and, could I be properly entertained, should have no objection to taking a trip to Greenland, for the sake of enjoying a fine

* The letter alluded to, not containing any thing material to the story, is omitted—it contained little more than a congratulation on Withers's arrival in England, which Horton had been informed of by the public papers, and an enquiry how he went on.

long night undisturbed by the intrusion of the sun, provided I had agreeable company. You may be sure, as soon as the day broke, I should take my leave, for I could never endure a day of six months, when I think one of as many hours too tedious: therefore, as you knew my sentiments, I take your congratulation in very good part; and assure you, I am as well pleased to be ordered here, as you can to have me.

You propose some queer questions, Charles: how shall I answer for myself? I am in waiting here for George Tomkins, and as he is reckoned punctual if he comes within two hours of any appointment, I have therefore so much time to spare, and will dedicate it to the satisfying thy curiosity. Before I was ordered abroad, I had a little amour with the daughter of a parson in the town where I was quartered. She was pretty. I was amorous, made fierce love to her, and had no great trouble to make her believe that I was really fond of her: she thought so, and it was my design not to undeceive her. Having received notice of the regiment's being ordered abroad, before it was universally known, I failed not to make my charmer acquainted with the circumstance. Dismal looks, streaming eyes,—for I can weep when I list,—heart-breaking sighs, all confirmed my sorrow, and augmented her distress. What vows of constancy did we exchange! and what declarations of mutual affection passed between us! I was soon to depart. Her love for me was such, that she could not think of suffering me to leave her. The time of our marching approached, and she could not conceal her affection. Her father was a check upon our tender endearments, and therefore we were

were obliged to have recourse to some other place to meet in, where we should be unrestrained by his presence. She appointed the garden, after he was retired to rest. It was that blest season of the year, when the body, fatigued and oppressed by the heat of the day, looks towards the coolness of the night as a happy relief from the power of the sun.—*Night, to lovers joys a friend.*—Always while you live, Charles, choose night to win a girl's heart; especially if you imagine she has any, even the slightest, regard for you. The gloom that surrounds you prevents your perceiving the confusion, the sweet confusion, that ever attends the acknowledgment of a passion, equal to that you wish to inspire. You cannot triumph in those blushes that she desires to hide from you. You may also take more liberties under cover of the murky veil that glorious goddess of intrigues, in favour to her votaries, casts around you. The mind seems to be relaxed: and having no external object to employ itself upon, is totally resigned to the sweet business of love. Then every word sinks deep into the melting fair one's heart; every sigh reaches her soul; every embrace adds fire to the fuel of passion; and the woman is soon in a blaze. You are a stranger to the effect of shame in the dark reign of night: but there are symptoms enough to discover the situation of the object of your hopes and wishes. The trembling hand, the palpitating heart; the half-smothered sigh, are sufficient tokens of your victory, and her inability to resist your pursuit of it to the utmost. Night! I adore thee. And since that propitious hour in which I was blessed with Maria's charms, am more beholden to thy

thy secret influence. I need not tell thee, Charles, that *I found the fond believing love-sick fair one*, all that I wished her. The fatal step for her was already taken: and I had no difficulty to persuade her to accompany me to America. I had little passion for the Squas, having received no very enticing description of them; and thought I might as well take a lovely countrywoman of mine along with me. The opportunity was favourable. One of her brothers was at college; the other, a mere stripling, was somewhere or another out of the way. Her father went to officiate for another parson at a distant church, and would not be home that night. Her way was unobstructed, and together we went. I introduced her into the corps as my wife: and indeed have had no cause to complain of her conduct since ever she lived with me. I should have married her, if the cash had not been wanting: but she had no fortune, and I had nothing but my commission, and so we were obliged, by prudential motives, to remain as we were. During all the time we were abroad, she was received, in every family, as Mrs. Withers; and the ladies on the continent are very scrupulous, you must know, in matters of that kind: but every thing passed off very well. Maria was prudent, and I was safe. For I should have been in a bad situation, were it known that I introduced a mistress for a wife. I have been in England not more than a month, and yet have found the bad consequences arising from my acknowledging her as such. So signal a defeat, Charles, no poor hero ever met with. These women! what intelligence they keep up with one another. There is no good comes of
any

any undertaking that a woman has a mind to spoil. I lodged Maria safe in London on my arrival in England, and posted down to Bath. I had more causes than one for going there. I was in debt to my agent; liked the place and the company I should meet there; and had a chance of retrieving my circumstances by a lucky stroke at play, or by some old dowager's taking a fancy to my pretty person, and bestowing a few thousands on me for the pleasure of looking at me sometimes—for that is all she should have had of me. I lost at play: but was successful with a young lady, who had a good fortune in her own disposal. My assiduity inclined her to imagine I was fond of her, though she had no other recommendation than her money: that was enough for me, for that was all I wanted. Never was any affair in a better train than this. I danced with and gallanted her in public, was esteemed and well received by her in private, and by some means or other, secured the casting vote of an aunt who was along with her. I was pressing: and the lady was every day giving me less occasion to be so. I was rejoicing in the success of my schemes, and glory was rising fast upon me; when, one unlucky day,

May that returning day be ever night!

I went, as usual, to see her. I don't know how it was, but I had a foreboding of something, I knew not what: and when I saw her looks, and the manner she received me in, my apprehensions encreased. Fond and respectful, as usual, I addressed her with the most tender inquiries

inquiries after her health; told her I had been at the pump-room in quest of her; and was very unhappy at not seeing her there. Her answer was short and cool. I was shocked. "The devil owes me a grudge," thought I, "and he thinks fit to pay me now." I complained of the alteration of her looks and manner, in as gentle a strain as I possibly could.

"Pray," said she, "Captain Withers, have not you been lately at—in America?"

"I have, Madam."

"Did you know Mr. Bowden's family?"

"Very well. A most agreeable family, that I am much indebted to for the many civilities they shewed me. He has two charming daughters, whom I was very intimate with."

"I am glad to hear that you are so well known to them. Emily, the elder, is a very particular friend of mine. I suppose you will be glad to see her; for she is in England, and at Bath; and I expect her here every minute." A rapping at the door interrupted her.—"And here she is."

She looked in my face very attentively during this speech; and I fancy I gave her cause to think, by certain changes in my countenance, which for the blood of me I could not avoid, that *something was rotten in the state of Denmark*. In truth, all I was employed in considering was, how to make my escape with any decency. The instant she asked me about Emily Bowden, and told me she was in Bath, I concluded that I was blown; for I had introduced Maria into Mrs. Bowden's family as my wife: and should I see her, and confess that it was not my wife whom I had introduced to her, I should be reduced

duced to a very disagreeable dilemma. I had not time to consider long. A light foot tripped up stairs; and the opening door discovered Emily Bowden. A slight salute passed between the ladies; and turning to me, who, with my hat in my hand, was preparing to march off as fast as I could, Emily asked, how I did, and how Mrs. Withers did. Upon my soul, I did not stay to answer the question; for I thought that by decamping; whatever desire of revenge the women might have, for their own sakes they would keep themselves quiet, and make no noise; and therefore determined to go off without beat of drum. If I was unlucky there, success might attend me elsewhere: so by the time I had got my things ready, a post-chaise was at the door, and I set off for this metropolis, which, like charity, hides many a multitude of sins. I am now truly upon the town; but fancy that it is more tired of me, than I am of it. The pleasures of London to a poor man, are like a girl that one cannot get at, for want of a sufficient pecuniary recommendation. I wish I had something to do, to get cleanly away from it; for I cannot be easy, and see others enjoy more of it than myself. Here comes Tomkins. He is in a hurry, now he has stayed a good hour and half beyond his appointed time: he desires compliments to you. Let me hear from you, Charles; and be assured I am, as much as ever,

Yours sincerely,

THO. WITHERS.

L E T-

LETTER XXVIII.

To Captain WITHERS.

I RECEIVED yours; and am glad, at this juncture, you are disengaged; as I can, without injuring your friendship, serve you and myself at the same time. I have a part for you to act, my dear Tom, that will require your utmost skill to support. You must relinquish the use of your senses; at least, you must not gratify them. The enclosed bill will enable you to leave London with credit, and bring you to Elwood. You must have a servant that can have no opportunity of knowing you; and, to him, assume the name of Medlicott: then hasten hither. In two days, at farthest, after the receipt of this, I shall expect to see you. Under this name I have desired you to make use of, I shall introduce you to my father, and also make you known to the loveliest woman that thou hast ever seen; but, as thou valuest thy dearest safety, or my regard, let not thy eyes tell her what effect her presence may have on you; neither let your tongue flatter her. And as the situation that I propose you shall be placed in, will give you the most favourable opportunities of saying, what I know every handsome fellow prides himself upon saying to a fine woman; yet you must avoid every circumstance of that kind. I tell you more: She is as chaste and pure as the snow before it yet falls to the earth. When I shall see you, which I trust will be in the time
herein

herein limited, I will explain my sentiments and design more fully to you; and then shall demand a most punctual and unerring compliance with every thing I shall require of thee. I have considered poor Maria's situation in the supply I have sent you. If she has behaved well to you, why don't you make her the real Mrs. Withers, as she has been so long acting a fictitious character with such propriety? We will talk about that when I see you. Adieu till then.

Yours,

CHARLES HORTON.

LET-

LETTER XXIX.

To Miss WEBSTER.

IF the forfeiture of truth and sincerity is or can be attended with such misfortunes, and so many troubles, in so small, and, I had almost said, trivial an affair as mine, what is the consequence of the violation of them in matters of greater moment? But is the welfare and happiness of my life a trivial concern, my dear Lucy? Is the interest of my heart, and the pleasure of my future days, of so little consequence? I find they are not, by my being so troubled in beholding the clouds that have obscured the bright prospect that was beginning to rise upon me. Let me only tell you how I am situated, Lucy, and how I suffer for my pretended encouragement of your brother. I had observed, for a day or two, a great alteration in Mr. Horton's behaviour to me: cool, distant, reserved, and affectedly polite, he seemed to conceal something his heart was full of, and did not enter into the little pleasures that were prepared for the company that remained here during that time. Affected by the change in his behaviour, and ignorant of the cause of it, having no opportunity of asking him the meaning of it, I was incapable of enjoying any satisfaction. Yesterday we were left alone, and I began to wish for an explanation of his behaviour to me: but Sir Thomas saved him the trouble. I was sitting alone in the parlour when he came into it.

“ I have

“ I have been desirous of speaking to you,
“ my dear Harriet,” said he: “ but the visit of
“ our friends rendered it impossible to speak to
“ you in private. Your welfare has ever been
“ very dear to me; and I would do every thing
“ to make you happy. Can I do it with a greater
“ prospect of success, than settling you well
“ in the world with a good husband? Tell me,
“ Harriet, what would you think of a good husband?”

“ I have never turned my thoughts that way,
“ Sir.”

“ Be ingenuous, my dear child: if your heart
“ has conceived a partiality for any worthy man
“ who can make you happy, let me know it. I
“ assure you, I will remove every impediment
“ that stands in the way between you and felicity:
“ open your heart to me.”

What an invitation this was! My throbbing heart was on my lips, and I was almost tempted to acquaint the worthy friend of my youth with the interests of my heart: but modesty and shame tied up my tongue, and restrained my speech. I remained silent.

“ If it was to one of your own sex, Harriet,
“ you would make no scruple of revealing the
“ secret of your inclinations: I will therefore
“ venture to propose to you, if you will give
“ me leave.”

I bowed assent.

“ There is a very worthy young man, whom
“ your good qualities have captivated, in this
“ neighbourhood, and whom I should be very
“ glad to have you united to: he is one too,
“ that I have observed you regard with no unfavourable eye.”

“ I, Sir,

"I, Sir, regard any man!"

"Yes, my dear; and he is sensible of it."

I remained astonished.

"You need not be ashamed, Harriet. Mr.

"Webster is very deserving your notice. His father was here a few days ago, and made proposals to me, which I cannot help approving: he likes you for a daughter extremely well; and, as his son has assured him that he is far from being disagreeable to you, and has the greatest reason to imagine, from your behaviour, that his suit would be well received, he has my consent, as far as I can have any power, to win your heart; and I have taken care that your fortune shall secure you respect from the family you are going into, and shall procure you a proper settlement. That shall be my business."

I could bear no longer, unmoved, these marks, these unmerited marks, of his goodness. I sunk on my knees beside him, and bathed his hand, while I kissed it, with my tears.

"You are too good, Sir; you overwhelm me with your bounty."

"Not more than you deserve, child," said he, raising me up. "I have acquainted Charles with this advantageous proposal; and as it meets your approbation, he is much pleased with the agreeable prospect you have of being happy with the man you love."

I in vain endeavoured to interrupt him.

"I will hear no more thanks or acknowledgments from you now, but will speak to you when you are more composed."

He departed abruptly from me, and left me astonished and confounded. I determined to see him

him soon, and explain my sentiments to him concerning your brother; but had scarce formed the resolution, when Sir Humphry Honiton, his son and daughter and sister, came to see Sir Thomas. Neither the boisterous mirth of the knight, nor the aukward imitations of his booby son, who considers his father as the greatest man in the world, nor the affected and absurd attempts of Miss Honiton and her niece Priscilla at wit and politeness, could raise my spirits. Mr. Horton, when he returned home in the evening, was surprised to see company: he appeared much chagrined, and just as usual to me. He snatched, however, an opportunity of whispering me, with a tone of voice and a sigh that bespoke his anguish, that I had no occasion to conceal my affection for Mr. Webster under the veil of a regard to him. "I was too miserable before," added he, "to want this addition to my unhappiness: you have my good wishes, Harriet." I was about to have made him a reply, when we were interrupted by Sir Humphry laughing at some clever thing his son had said, which it seems, however, had savoured somewhat of indelicacy, and for which his aunt and sister were reproving him very severely. I wished them at home with all my heart. I would have undeceived Mr. Horton, if I could have spoke to him. Hang these people for making this unseasonable visit! To endure the pain I do, and, if he loves me, he must also do, for even an hour, is a tormenting reflection. As I dare not write to him, I can't otherwise explain my conduct to him: he must imagine me the most deceitful of women. How I must suffer in his opinion, since I cannot unravel this mystery, and especially as his father told

told me that this match was proposed with my approbation. It is past one o'clock; and I am so weary with the occurrences of this day, that I wish to go to bed, though I cannot sleep. The time that is assigned me for rest, I employ, partly, in writing to you. We are not so regular now since this visit as we used to be; for Sir Humphry likes his bottle after supper, and his sister cards to a great degree: so we seldom retire till past twelve. May this visit be soon at an end. Farewel, Lucy. I doubt whether you can read what is here written. My eyes are almost closed, but I will keep them open to assure you I am,

Yours affectionately,

HARRIET NICOLLS.

LET-

LETTER XXX.

To the Same.

I AM a little relieved, my dear friend, by the arrival of a captain Medlicott, an intimate of Mr. Horton. A very agreeable man indeed, and possessed of much humour. He adapts himself to the genius and capacities of our visitants in a most extraordinary manner; and their only contention is, who shall have the greater share of his company. He has taken off their attention from me, and I have now the comfortable privilege of being miserable unnoticed: he, who is all spirits, prevents those intolerable questions being asked a person who is actually depressed, which only serve, in reality, to make one worse. Such as—"You are low spirited" "Miss—a'n't you well?—What's the matter?"—And many others equally important, that they are well convinced will never be answered. Captain Medlicott saves me from these tiresome interrogations: he amuses them all so much, that they are very indifferent whether I am pleased or no. He humours the knight, and laughs both with him and at him: praises the son, which the father takes as an indirect compliment to himself: he flatters the aunt for her judgment and knowledge, and commends the niece for her manners and politeness: he is all in all with every one of them. Mr. Horton laughs very heartily to see his friend suit himself so exactly
to

to all their tastes and dispositions. But is not there, my Lucy, a meanness in a man's thus rendering himself subservient to the whims and caprices of others, for the poor satisfaction of obtaining praise from such people? for you must know, that they are lavish in his praise, and extravagantly fond of him. Mr. Horton despises them for assuming characters they are unable to support. His ingenuous temper, in contemning their follies, would induce them to look at home, and act in their proper sphere: captain Medicott, by indulging their vanity, and concealing or commending their foibles, only holds them up as objects of ridicule to the more sensible part of the world, who will, undoubtedly, enjoy a joke wherever they can meet it. I like Mr. Horton's sincerity, though it has the appearance of a disagreeable bluntness, better than the captain's politeness, which has only in view his own amusement, and that of those who are clear-sighted enough to perceive his drift. Let them, therefore, be pleased one with another: he procures me a temporary ease, and I am obliged to him. But I cannot get an opportunity of speaking to Mr. Horton: He seems to shun me, though his looks and his behaviour shew, that something has affected him greatly, and which he has not been able to shake off. What can it be, but this pretended consent and approbation to receive your brother's addresses? He was here last night. Sure he might have observed with what caution I shunned him, and how coolly I spoke to him. Horton pierced him through with his eyes, and endeavoured to search his soul. He watched us with the closest attention, and was observant of us only; though there were many

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other objects that would, at any other time, have attracted his notice. I was much embarrassed in my behaviour, and knew not what step to take. The eyes of Mr. Horton checked and awed me. I intended to have put an end to your brother's hopes; but was fearful, should Mr. Horton see us engaged in close conversation, he would imagine, though I should tell him our subject, that I misrepresented matters to him. There's no such thing as enjoying any liberty or pleasure where these people are. I am interrupted. A walk is proposed; and it would be good for nothing, if Miss Harriet was not one of the company. Impertinent creatures! Solitude is, at present, infinitely more pleasing to

HARRIET NICOLLS.

LET-

LETTER XXXI.

To Captain TOMKINS.

LONDON is a charming place, when one can enjoy its pleasures; but when they are uncomeatable, there is not a more melancholy spot in the world. The country then is a thousand times more agreeable, where every pleasure you can enjoy there is prepared for you, and where you have only to be pleased with the endeavours of others, to make the time pass as agreeably as possible. Elwood is a most delightful place; and, though in the decline of the year, there are a thousand beautiful scenes: the house is a noble one. The gardens are laid out with great taste, and very extensive: there is a very fine park too, well stocked: the country around has plenty of game. I left London in high spirits, and was pleased with every thing that came in my way: but the agreeable people inhabiting the house, beat the pretty things on the outside all to nothing. The old gentleman is a most agreeable, polite, sensible man: He seems master of the house only for the purpose of making his visitors more welcome, and better satisfied with their situations. He has a sister that performs the office of mistress of the ceremonies: a mighty good sort of woman to all appearance; but she is old, and consequently not an object worthy of my notice. Charles you are well acquainted with; but he is not the same sprightly fellow he was formerly: no creature can be more altered. He is thoughtful, moping, and fond of solitude: however, that he can't indulge himself

in here just at present. The cause of this change in him is not difficult to be found out. It is—O George, it is—the loveliest girl I ever saw: I would describe her if I could; but am afraid of looking at her too much, lest I should transgress Charles's orders, and, in making use of my senses, tell her such a tale with my eyes, that would sufficiently prove the power of her charms: they are transcendent. But it is not lawful to speak of her in such a manner as to do justice to her perfections. She sings too, George, and plays like an angel.

To touch her's heaven—But, to enjoy her—Oh! How the devil she came by all these qualifications I can't conceive,—nor did we ever hear Charles speak of such an enchanting female in his family; so that when she was introduced to me I was struck all in a heap, though I had been forewarned of something extraordinary. Sir Thomas is amazingly fond of her, and treats her like a daughter: I'll say no more about her, for my brain is almost turned with thinking of her. Happily for me, there are other objects here that call off my attention from her charms; and though they can't banish her idea, they amuse me, and prevent my thinking of her so much, and so often, as I otherwise should. They are visitors; and like Miss Harriet Nicolls—that's the lovely maid's name, George,—almost beggar description. They consist of four personages, Sir Humphry Honiton, his son and daughter, and his sister—A maid—if you'll believe her; but, should she be called an old maid, it would not be far from the truth. To begin with the masculine gender, as it has the pre-eminence; being, as the honest Mr. Lilly informs me in his grammar,
more

more worthy than the feminine. Sir Humphry, who, like Jack Falstaff, is all guts and midriff, is possessed of a fine estate at some distance from Elwood; and, where he passes most of his time; is a country wit; unacquainted with either men, manners, or books; yet has a great opinion of himself, and very little of those who do not pay a proper deference to him. Any attempt to lessen his imaginary consequence, he takes very heinously, and seldom forgives the offender. Convinced that his knowledge is full sufficient for his state in life, and that to be overburdened with learning is a great misfortune, and the time spent in acquiring it all thrown away, he is fully determined not to breed up his son in such a road as may induce him, in future time, should they chance to meet, to throw him out of the saddle into the dirt: in plain English, if his son should acquire more sense than the father, he would, on some occasions, be apt to contradict the knight, whose violence of temper, and prepossession in his own favour, would bear no such thing, and intestine wars would inevitably ensue: but Jack admires his father more than any body else; and they are, at this moment, the best friends in the world: for the son is the echo of his father.—Miss Priscilla his daughter, who is named after her aunt, under whose tuition she has been all her life, as her mother died very soon after she was born, is a fine plump girl about eighteen, with rosy cheeks and nut-brown hair; by no means a bad piece: but oh! how widely different from the fair Harriet! With all this appearance of the most perfect health, poor Priscilla, copying her aunt, is a complete valetudinarian. The two ladies are dying for hours

together, while salts, eau de luce, and a thousand different things are applied in vain. The consequence of their delicacy, so affected and so over acted, is, that the knight and his son are eternally rallying them, as they term it.—Another person would not unjustly stile it abuse: On the contrary, the females recriminate, by reproving the uncouth mortals for their beastly jokes. This party affords me sufficient amusement: for I have more reasons than one to attach myself to this family. Know then, that Miss Priscilla has about nine or ten thousand pounds, in her own disposal. Is this not a prize worth looking after? My affairs are damnably *derangé*; a sum of money like this would soon set me up in the world again, and not only make a man of me for the present, but enable me to purchase a majority. The fair nymph does not look on me with unfavourable eyes; and when my imagination is heated with beholding Miss Nicolls, if an opportunity offers to speak to my Dulcinea, which is not often, as her aunt seldom stirs from her, I tell her all those fond things that the looks of the other have inspired me with; this is not unacceptable. I have got the aunt of my side too, by some means or other—honest you may swear for it: a little decent flattery, or so. She is a judge of polite learning, as she thinks. Is there any harm in my swearing it? I devote my time to the quadrille table along with her and her niece, who are both passionately fond of cards. This is interpreted into a great compliment by them; for the other gentlemen amuse themselves generally in another manner. So should I, were there not more interesting views in attending a pool. Charles, young Homiton,
and

and I, go a shooting frequently. We are sworn brothers. He has revealed several of his secrets to me—"Never saw an officer that was half so good natured afore—they are so proud and so saucy that they wa'n't speak to a body—and father says, that we pays them for all that, and puts such good cloaths on their backs." It was all true. Then he is enamoured of Harriet. "Wounds," says he, licking his lips, "she's a dainty wench: but I'se afeared she won't like me, tho' I don't think that master Horton there's fond o'her—for he never speaks a word to her: but whenever I gets her by herself, I kisses her till her ears crack again."

"Aye—does she suffer you?"

"How can she help it? I holds her fast, and when she cries out I lets her go: but I assure you, Captain, I am deeply in love with her, and I told her so, but she does not mind what I say."

It is in vain to attempt relating his conversation particularly; for I hear so much, and mind so little of what he says, that you may chance to come at the marrow only of what he tells me. This conversation happens when we are in the field, and Charles flinks away from us. The young squire then opens his heart. He shall be serviceable to me yet. I could not help, for the blood of me, telling poor Charles what a dreadful rival he has.

"That fool is not to be feared," said he: "but I will punish him, when I am at leisure, for even thinking of such perfection."

Upon my soul, George, never was any body more smitten, or deeply in for it, than Horton. The change on his countenance, the moment

he sees her, plainly evinces the joy the sight of her gives him. His eyes shoot flames. You know he is a very fine fellow. His passion adds grace both to his person and face: and his sentiments are spoken in his countenance. The folks here either do not, or pretend they do not see, what is very visible to me. And Miss Nicolls is so extremely reserved, and guards her actions in such a manner, that there is no suspicion of her being touched also: but I know more than all that. Her sweet bosom heaves not so violently for nothing whenever Charles appears: her charming face has some other cause for being covered with a beauteous blush, whenever he speaks to her, than mere modesty and bashfulness. No—no—there is more in it than all that comes to. Here they are, just come from church. I took that opportunity of writing to you. Young Honiton plagued me to go with him: I told him I had letters to write.

“Aye, to your sweet-heart in London, be’n’t they now? I told you my sweet-heart, you should tell me of yours.”

“So I will, at some time or another: will you help me to get at her?”

“I will, by gosh.”

Away he went: he will be up with me directly; so, in my own defence, I must conclude, yours,

T. WITHERS.

LET-

LETTER XXXII.

To the Same.

I KNOW not for what purpose I was brought down here: and it is quite immaterial to me what it is, or will be. All that I desire is, not to quit this place soon, for it is very agreeable; and the schemes I have in agitation, require to arrive to greater maturity. Afterwards they will ripen of themselves. I increase in favour with the knight and his family. Sir Thomas and *his* family are too good, and too sensible, for me to make any thing of: therefore, Sir Humphry for my money. He delights in talking politics, especially when he is half-seas over, which he generally is in less than an hour after dinner. Sir Thomas, who is more temperate, and consequently more sober, refuses to take a part in the dispute. The girls go off, but Mrs. Allen, and Mrs. Honiton, who is the bitter and merciless opponent of her brother, generally stay. The father and son side together. The lady has me for her ally. The knight is pushed sometimes so very close, that he is almost obliged to hold his tongue, not to own himself vanquished in argument—that would be the most mortifying circumstance in the world. Then he addresses me:

“Od rot’un—a sly bitch:—now a thinks as I do, and if he’ad a mind to speak he’ad made

“ it all plain against you, Pris. But you officers
 “ generally side with the court, and the petti-
 “ coats.”

“ I must always carry reason with me, Sir
 “ Humphry: you would not have me speak
 “ against my conscience?”

“ There again; there again now,” adds the
 knight; “ if you had either the one or the other,
 “ a body wou’dn’t be angry: but you know—
 “ yes, you know in your heart, that there is
 “ neither for you: I shall be finely hoped up
 “ too, when I get home with Pris there and her
 “ notions, ever since you’ve taken her part.
 “ Zounds, I shall be weary of my life.”

“ This is the way, captain,” rejoins the lady,
 “ that my brother serves me. I know more of
 “ the world, and of every thing, than he does,
 “ and he is sensible of it: but he is so obsti-
 “ nate.”

“ It’s false, it’s damn’d false,” quoth the knight,
 sputtering with rage; “ I’m not sensible, nor I’m
 “ not obstinate: but because you’ve liv’d in Lon-
 “ don with my foolish aunt, nobody can know
 “ so much as you.”

The poor lady, whose passion puts her deli-
 cacy to flight, generally retorts on her brother;
 and I hand her out of the room, as “ the bruta-
 “ lity of her brother,” she says, “ entirely over-
 “ comes the pacific philosophy of her temper.”
 I am appealed to for the propriety of her argu-
 ments—“ they are most convincing, madam.”

Notwithstanding I have opposed Sir Humphry
 in these political contests, yet he is so well recon-
 ciled to me over a bottle, that he has given me
 a very pressing invitation to go and spend some
 time with him at his seat. This is not to be re-
 fused; and when it is proper, shall be accepted.

In

In the mean time, the gentle Priscilla listens with patience and pleasure to the amorous tale. Never accustomed in her life to have a will of her own, she does not know what to do. She shall not want instruction. Besides, the pleasure that she will have in keeping a secret from her father and aunt, especially where a lover's concerned, will be worth all the rest of it. If the devil stands neuter, I think I shall have a much better chance of succeeding than at Bath: for

Thus far my arms with conquest have been
crown'd.

Poor Jack Honiton was lugged into a scrape yesterday by my assistance, though he does not know to whom he is indebted. Charles was out of the way some where or other, and Harriet had just gone into the parlour alone. My young squire immediately followed her: "Now for a kiss," said he, "mum"—clapping his fingers significantly to his nose. I nodded approbation; but turning myself about, perceived Mrs. Honiton and Priscilla at my back. Jack had not shut the parlour door so close as he ought to have done; and Mrs. Honiton, going towards it, stopped to take notice of something in the garden. Priscilla's hand was in mine behind her aunt's back, a very willing prisoner. Short time had we to look about us, when we heard Miss Nicolls's voice:

"Mr. Honiton, I beg for God's sake you will desist—I will not be treated so."

In rushed the aunt, and found the lovely girl in the paws of the bear, who was endeavouring
to

to force a kiss from her. Her beauty was heightened by the struggle she had with her antagonist; who looked as foolish, and as much disappointed, as you please. Priscilla ran to help Miss Nicolls adjust herself. The aunt sunk down lifeless in a chair, in a fit of surprize and vexation. Salts soon restored her. She was not so bad as she pretended.—“ Gracious heaven,” said she, recovering herself, and sitting upright, but speaking with a faint and languid accent, “ Did I ever expect to see my nephew behave “ in such a manner! Did I ever think to see the “ heir of the family of the Honitons comport “ himself thus, to the disgrace of us all. I “ should rather imagine it was one of your “ hounds that had attacked the lady, and going “ to devour her open-mouthed, than a young “ gentleman of family, fortune, and fashion, “ intreating a favour from a young lady, that “ should be demanded on his knees in the most “ supplicating and humble attitude. Oh! my “ dear Miss Nicolls, impute not my nephew’s “ crime to me, but to the —.”

“ Zounds,” quoth the squire, who by this time had found the use of his tongue, “ What “ crime have I been guilty of? I han’t stole any “ thing, have I? and if I did want to kiss Miss “ Harriet here, what hurt in that? I suppose “ you loved kissing when you was young.”

“ Who I, I love kissing,” replied his aunt, “ whose delicacy gave way to rage; What “ would you insinuate, you vile ungracious “ boy? but I’ll not be insulted in this manner. “ Crime! were you not guilty of making an as- “ sault upon the person of Miss Nicolls? I wish “ she

" she could punish you severely for it: I would join her to prosecute you."

" Why, sure you don't think I was going to ravish the young lady: Was I, Miss Harriet?"

The blushing Harriet, to pacify the enraged aunt, declared, " She believed his intention was to kiss her; but that she did not ——."

" There now; I told you that she liked kissing, and so do you all," said he, hastening to the door, which I had taken possession of: for he knew and dreaded the impending storm, and was willing to avoid it.

" Do let me out, captain; do, for the love of God, for aunt and sister will both fall on me now."

" You must not avoid the reproofs of the ladies, Mr. Honiton."

He had predicted very truly: for the aunt and sister were beginning to open on him; and I prevented his getting out, by standing with my back to the door,—when, on a sudden, I found myself propelled with very great violence. In my progression I struck full against him, and drove him some paces backwards. Unfortunately, a favourite lap-dog of his aunt's happened to be in his way; and he trod on him. The creature howled most incessantly; and the squire in his confusion, endeavouring to recover himself, staggered against a table, where a very elegant set of tea-things stood ready for use. The table, not capable of resisting his weight, was overset; and the china lay scattered in glittering fragments: but finding himself falling, he caught at the window curtain of crimson damask, pulled that down along with him, and, with the ruins of the china, he measured his length on the floor. The

two girls ran to take up the cups and saucers: Mrs. Honiton was consoling her dog, who howled most abominably: and the squire was sitting on the floor in amaze, with the curtain still in his hand, when his father entered, who had been truly the occasion of all this mischief.

"Holla," said he, as loud as he could bawl; "What the devil, is hell broke loose, or have we the confusion of Babel here.—Zoons, Jack, what a figure thee cuttest; what brought thee there, mon?"

The son was so astonished, he could not answer; and I could no longer contain myself, so indulged a violent fit of laughter, in which Miss Nicolls and Priscilla joined.

Jack, with a rueful countenance,

Amaz'd, beheld the mischiefs he had done!

and turning to his father, who had taken the arm-chair, and began to examine magisterially into the merits of the affair, and to know the occasion of this uproar, replied, "that his aunt was the occasion of it all, for she wanted to have him tried at the sessions for striving to kiss Miss Harriet."

"Ha! ha! boy," said the knight; "aye, aye, a chip of the old block, egad. Well, and so he made you squeak, Miss Harriet, eh? When I was of Jack's age, I'd have made you squeak worse. There was not such a fellow for the girls in the county; and Jack is following my steps, I find. Aye, aye; cat will after kind."

The girls had made their escape before the knight had half finished his speech. They expected

pected what was to come, and determined to avoid being shocked by his want of delicacy. Bad as I am, it is pain to me to see a woman blush in my company in consequence of an indecent thing being said; and I really believe it cannot affect her more than it does me. It is not the first time, that a reprehension of such a liberty in conversation has nearly drawn me into a scrape.

Mrs. Honiton alone stayed. With the utmost indignation against her brother, and summoning up all the contempt she could muster into her countenance, she addressed him with a great composure and gravity: "I am not astonished at the insolent and impudent deportment of that young man, whom I am almost ashamed to call my nephew, nor his committing such an outrage in the house of a gentleman to whose hospitality we are indebted, when I see him supported and encouraged in his licentiousness and wickedness by those, whom nature and custom have appointed his guardians and tutors. You will have reason to repent, and very soon, or I am much mistaken, your countenancing that vile renegade in his reprobate courses. I shall take care to leave him to yourself, who are a thousand times worse than he is: the old fool is always most incorrigible." And out of the room she stalked with inexpressible dignity.

"Fool—old fool"—quoth the knight, getting out of his chair, and raising his voice as he thought his sister got farther off; "Well; very well; —but I won't be treated so by any woman that ever wore an head. There was but one good woman, and she had never a one. What a
"pox

"pox does she keep a noise about debts and hospitality? When Sir Thomas comes to see me, I gi's un as good as I gets: what does he want more? Suppose the boy did kiss the girl, where's the harm of that, captain, eh? A man's always hampered that's under petticoat government—that he is; and it had been better for the nation—but never mind thy aunt, Jack; she's spoiled poor Pris; she may do what she wull wi' her, but I'll have my boy to my own mind. There's the tea-gear, there, we must put new ones in their place: but how the devil didst come to be such an ass as to run against them, I can't tell."

I persuaded Sir Humphry to take a walk till matters should be settled in the parlour, which had been the scene of action; and they went with me into the garden—the knight growling, and the son not thoroughly satisfied or convinced, that such things had happened at all, as they passed through his brain so quickly, there was hardly any trace left of such transactions. However, between us we contrived to inform the father of the whole affair, who laughed at it very loudly and very long.

At tea we joined the ladies. The politeness of Mrs. Allen prevented her saying a word about what had happened; and Mrs. Honiton, highly offended at both her brother and nephew, never even looked towards them. The girls kept tittering; and Charles, whom I made acquainted with the whole affair, joined their mirth, to the poor squire's utter discomfiture. He sat broiling all the time he was in the room with them. In vain did the knight endeavour to console him: he was conscious of the ridiculous figure he cut,

and

and was incapable of even admiring or laughing at his father, who was remarkably pleasant.

Thus my time is spent, George: but agreeably to me. I am not idle; and a red coat does much with the women. I shall let you know every step that is taken in which I am concerned. Go and see poor Maria: tell her that you have heard from me, and disclose as much as you think necessary of my affairs, without mentioning any thing of my views in regard to Priscilla. Farewell. I have no doubt but we shall soon meet in the centre of pleasure, and then we shall talk these matters over together. Till then, I am your sincere,

T. WITHERS.

L E T.

LETTER XXXIII.

TO CHARLES HORTON, Esq.

IT was very rash to make such a promise as I have done.—But to eradicate the notions so derogatory to the honour and just character of the lovely sex which you have suffered so unhappily to take possession of your heart, and for that laudable purpose only, have I made this attempt at recollecting some of the most material passages of my life. The consideration that a fellow creature, whose felicity depends so much upon opinion, may be properly instructed by my misfortunes, and learn to shun a road that will undoubtedly terminate in his destruction, has enabled me to begin the disagreeable recital, and has given me strength to finish it. May it have the good effect I wish it! may it tend to remove scruples from your breast, that will never suffer you to rest! Judge then of my friendship, that has revealed this history to you: for know, Horton,

— There is an avarice in grief:
And the wan eye of sorrow loves to gaze,
Upon its secret hoard of treasur'd woes,
In pining solitude.—

The name you know me by is not that of my family: especial reasons, at this time, prevent my revealing it: but it will not signify, or make any difference to you in the perusal of these sheets.

heets. My father was a man of large fortune, although the younger branch of a noble family. I am also the younger of two sons which he had. His affection seemed not to be, by any means, equally divided between us: my elder brother possessed it all. He copied his father too exactly, to shew any great fondness for me; and, till I was twenty, seldom saw them; or when it so happened that vacations called me home, I received fresh marks of their disregard. This in the main was not prejudicial to me. My books were my chief delight: they afforded me a satisfaction and pleasure, not to be found in the company of my friends and relations. My father had designed me for the army, and I longed for the hour of attaining a commission; not so much for the foolish pride in wearing a laced coat and a cockade, as being separated from those who never treated me with kindness, and whom I always left with disgust. The hour at length arrived; and I was appointed an ensign in a marching regiment. My father fitted me out; and, in a letter he then sent me, declared, that while he lived he would give me regimentals every year; and that was all that could be expected from him: that I was a younger child, and had no occasion for money; and that my pay would be sufficient to maintain me: that my elder brother, having the name and honour of the family to support, it was necessary that he should have a proper fortune to do it with. He concluded, with giving me much good advice, which he could spare more easily than his money. The desire he had to support the name and dignity of a family he was very much attached to, was, I am willing to think, the only cause he could have,

have, at that time, for treating me with so much unkindness.

I joined the regiment with all the expedition possible. My pay was all I had to support me; and the utmost frugality and œconomy was necessary. In two years after, whether through my father's interest, or not, is a doubt, I obtained a lieutenancy. This flattered my hopes, which were very sanguine: and, wishing to become independent of my family, I applied myself very closely to the studies that might be of service to me hereafter.—My father continued to do as he had promised, and I was situated tolerably enough. This was not to last long. In one of the places where I was quartered, the vicar of the parish had a large family. To see his eldest daughter, was to love her. Nor were her manners less pure, than her face beautiful. The tenderest passion seized my heart when I first saw her; and it only became confirmed, on a more intimate acquaintance with her virtues. The benefice was but small which her father enjoyed; and having five or six children, all he could do was, to support them decently: consequently, his daughters could expect no fortunes; their personal attractions, and their virtuous education, was all their dowry. The old gentleman was of a very hospitable disposition, and shewed all the civilities in his power to those strangers who came in his way. An officer is not supposed to be acquainted in every town he goes through: Mr. Cooke knew this, and politely invited me to dine with him the first Sunday after I arrived in his neighbourhood. We seemed pleased with each other, and he requested me to call frequently on him. The invitation did not
require

require to be repeated, before it was accepted. His daughter alone had been attraction enough to make me visit him often. The pleasure the sight of so much beauty had given me, prevented my making proper reflections on my situation; and the passion had taken such entire possession of my heart, that it was too late to think about any thing but the means of gratifying it. The lovely maid had no fortune; and I was to expect no assistance from my family. To marry her, was to commit a rash and foolish action; and I should reduce her to a worse situation than that she was already in. While I was thus hesitating what to do, divided between my passion and my prudence, I could not refrain from visiting her constantly.—The friendship her father professed for me, served as an excuse for the frequency of my visits: but, I only grew more enamoured every hour, and less capable of listening to the dictates of reason and prudence. Yet she was truly meritorious: and were a man to be ruined by his attachment to a woman whose only fault was want of fortune, there could not have been a more lovely or faultless object than my darling Nancy. My constant attendance at Mr. Cooke's was taken notice of: people, who ought to mind their own affairs, were extremely busy in taking notice of those of others. There was to be a match, to be sure, between the lieutenant and Miss Cooke. If a man only speaks to a girl in a country town, it is concluded upon, by some of these industrious folks, that there is either an amour, a marriage on foot, or something worse. These reports spread, and at last reached Mr. Cooke's ear. "I am very sorry, Mr. Simpson," said he to me one day, "that it is become so
"necessary

“ necessary for the peace and reputation of my
 “ family, and especially the female part of it
 “ to entreat the favour of you to be less particu-
 “ lar at my house. The ill-natured people of
 “ this place attribute those visits which, as my
 “ friend, you are so kind to make me, to another
 “ cause. My poor Nancy is not disagreeable—I speak with a father’s fondness; and as
 “ she has no fortune, the smallest stain that malice
 “ or levollence or envy may throw on her character
 “ will be the utter ruin of her. I assure you
 “ that you have my esteem, which you very
 “ much deserve, and I shall always retain for
 “ you; but you are sensible of the truth of what
 “ I now tell you, and cannot blame me for being
 “ tender in so nice a point.”

“ Ah, Sir, your lovely daughter should be
 “ dear to you; and every measure you take to pre-
 “ vent the foul breath of calumny from tainting
 “ her unfullied reputation, is most deserving of
 “ praise. I am extremely sorry, Sir, that my
 “ visiting at your house should have given you the
 “ slightest uneasiness. I would abstain from it
 “ if I could: but since this subject has been
 “ started to me by you, I must confess, that I
 “ entertain the most honourable and ardent passion
 “ for your daughter, and wish to be united
 “ to her by the most sacred ties.”

“ I should like you for a son, Mr. Simpson
 “ in preference to any one I have yet seen.
 “ Your character, and your deportment, have
 “ given me a very high opinion of you: but
 “ you should consider, that you have only your
 “ pay to depend upon, and I am not able to give
 “ my child any fortune.”

I told him, that point had been the subject on which my thoughts had been employed for a long time past: that many men contrived to support themselves and families on a lieutenant's pay; and that there were hopes of my rising. In short, I overcame his scruples; and he consented to my paying my addresses to his daughter. At my request, he said nothing to her of what had passed between us. When I had the liberty of speaking to her on the subject that most affected me, my heart was easier than it had been of a long time before; and especially, as she did not seem averse to reward my passion with her hand. At last, she confessed that I was dear to her as I wished to be. That was the summit of my hopes. There was nothing to be done now, but perform that ceremony which was to unite us for ever. But Mr. Cooke insisted, that I should write to my father, and give him an account of myself. "If he refuses his consent, yet, if it is not done without his knowledge," added the good man, "there will be the less to answer for, if any bad consequences should follow, which I hope will not. 'Tis true, there is very little to be expected from such an application, as he seems to have thrown you off already; but I think it absolutely necessary and proper that you should acquaint him with your intention of marrying my daughter." In obedience to his advice, I wrote to my father and told him my situation; that all my future happiness depended upon my being united to the woman who had my heart; and added, that matters had gone so far, that it was now impossible to retract.

My

My brother answered this letter in my father's name. Under the appearance of cool and distant politeness, he couched the most bitter and cutting expressions. Among the rest he said, that his father made no doubt but the lady, who was happy enough to be my choice, had no occasion for any other fortune than her perfections; which he was very glad to hear were so numerous, and which would undoubtedly contribute to my future felicity. To a man in love, every thing else was entirely unnecessary; and therefore he would not be so impertinent as to offer his assistance, which would only interrupt, instead of compleat, my happiness: that he thought I could not, in honour, be off with the lady now; and concluded, with wishing me much joy.

Not so much disappointed as chagrined, at reading this epistle, I hastened to shew it to Mr. Cooke. He perceived vexation and concern in my face; and, without saying a word, I gave him the letter to read. When he had finished, "Nothing else was to be expected from those who had treated you so badly before," said he: "but this assurance of your father's want of affection, and your brother's cruelty, shall make no alteration in me. You require some comfort to balance this bad treatment from your family." He was as good as his word: and in a short time he made me the happiest of mankind, in giving me his charming daughter. It was quite indifferent to me, whether my family took notice of me, or not: I was happy in the embraces of the loveliest of women,—and wanted nothing more. We had been married a little above two years, in which time she presented

sented me a boy beautiful as his mother. I was happy beyond expression.—For,

—————Ev'ry night

I slept with soft content about my head;
And never waked, but to a joyful morning.

Rich in the possession of each other, we wanted no wealth. Our prudence and frugality enabled us to live very comfortably on my pay. But the moment arrived, in which, I may say, I first became acquainted with sorrow. The regiment to which I belonged was ordered abroad, to relieve some of the garrisons in America. Our parting was too painful and melancholy to relate or describe. My finances would not enable me to take my wife with me, and she was obliged, though unwillingly, to stay behind me. I had prevailed upon her father to let her remain at his house during my absence; and allowed her part of my pay for her maintenance. With many promises of quick return, with many assurances of my fidelity, did I endeavour to comfort my lovely girl. Dissolved in tears, when she had no longer force to retain me in her arms, I broke away from her. I arrived safely in America, and continued there for near three years; still taking every possible method of acquainting my dearest Nancy of my welfare, and assuring her that I longed to be with her again. A war was talked of, and the Indians, our enemies, began to commit hostilities: parties of us were frequently sent out to oppose them, with various success. It came at last to my turn: and going into a part of the country that we had very little knowledge of, and even our guides were ignorant

of, though they pretended to be very well acquainted with it, we fell into an ambuscade the enemy had laid for us. My brave companions, who defended themselves like men, were cut off before my face. I was severely wounded: and as they had nothing to fear, our whole party being destroyed, the Indians, instead of scalping, carried me off along with them. They cured my wounds, and forced me to march up into the country. For four days I travelled without ever resting, except at night, and frequently thought that every moment would be my last; for I was so feeble with the loss of blood, and the pain of my wounds, that I could scarcely walk at all. At length we arrived at our journey's end, which was the chief town of the nation with whom we were at war. I was the only prisoner: for all the rest of my companions happily expired on the field. I was put into one of their huts, and some mats were allowed me to lie on. Food was brought to me regularly every day, and I was obliged to eat whether I would or no. Uncertain what was to be my fate, it was not for myself, but my wife and child, I grieved.—“Never to be seen again, much lamented pair,”—cried I, “what will become of you when I am gone!” One morning I heard a great many voices around my cabin, and several shouts of joy. I knew not what was the matter, but soon learned the reason of it. Some of the Indians coming into the place where I was, led me out with great ceremony. The principal men were armed: and being placed in the midst of them, they conducted me into a plain where a great number of women and children were assembled, and as I drew nearer to them,

them, perceived a large stake fixed in the ground, and wood placed near it in order to burn me alive. Wretched as I was, my soul was chilled at the thoughts of so cruel a death. My fortitude almost forsook me, and I was near falling on the earth. The vapour that clouded my eyes, and deprived me of my senses, however soon was dissipated; and my courage was restored to me. It was in vain to resist: and therefore I resolved to bear my fate with as much magnanimity as possible; and shew the savages, that even their tortures could not daunt a British spirit. Collecting myself as much as possible, and imploring the father of mercy to give me strength to support that dreadful death, I marched with intrepidity through the croud, and suffered my arms and legs to be bound to the tree, with apparent composure. The faggots and blocks of wood were placed around me, and the Indians formed a circle about me: the men on the inside, and the women and children beyond them again. One of the men held a blazing firebrand in his hand: and an awful silence took possession of them all. In this situation I remained near half an hour. My thoughts were so confused, and my agitation so great, that I cannot tell you what my feelings were at that moment: but I know, by experience, that it is not so much death, as dying, that is terrible. They delayed so long, that I suffered in imagination all the pains of death; and prayed to be released from this miserable state of suspense. At length I observed the people divide, and open to the right and left. They paid great respect to an old Indian, who approached the place where I was with a slow pace, but with much dignity:

he was followed by about twenty others, who appeared to be all old men. When he came near enough to see my face, he viewed me with great earnestness: then coming within less than a yard of me, examined my features, as he leaned upon his fusée, very closely. He uttered a loud exclamation which I did not understand, but which brought the others up to him. They all, according to his desire, examined me with great attention, and conferred with him. He immediately beckoned to some of the warriors to untie me: they unbound me accordingly; and presuming that he was the chief of the nation, from the respect that was paid him, as soon as I had obtained my freedom, I threw myself at his feet, and kissed his hands. He soon raised me from that humiliating posture, and pressed me to his bosom with a warmth and affection that astonished me. We remained in silence, gazing at each other for some time. Mutually delighted—the one for some hidden cause, and the other from being delivered so suddenly and unexpectedly from a dreadful and horrible fate. One of the old Indians, who, as he informed me afterwards, had been bred among the English, relieved me from my uncertainty: he spoke intelligibly, and that was all, and told me, “that the person who had saved me from being
 “a sacrifice, was their chief: that he had one
 “son whom he was remarkably fond of, and
 “who was very deserving of his affection, and
 “had been killed some time before in an engagement with one of the neighbouring nations,
 “with whom they were at war. Since that
 “time he had been inconsolable, and no amusement was powerful enough to banish the re-
 “membrance

“membrance of his beloved son: that when he
“came to view me, he found so great a resem-
“blance in my face and person of his lamented
“child, that he was quite astonished, and cried
“out; which made those who attended him,
“and were the seniors of the nation, come to
“see what was the matter. They all agreed
“with him that the likeness was very striking,
“and he accordingly ordered me to be set free,
“and could not help embracing the image of
“his son.” While the Indian yet spoke, a con-
fused murmur ran through the assembly, and
grew louder and louder. The chief started from
the agreeable reverie which he fondly indulged,
in imagining he saw his son in me, and turning
to the people, held up his hand, as to command
silence, that he might speak to them. He was
instantly obeyed; and addressing himself to
them, told them, as it was afterwards explained
to me, that he had ordered the execution of the
Englishman to be suspended for a time; that he
wished to save him entirely, for, in him, he
saw such a resemblance of his dear Tuskarora
(his son’s name), that he should have suffered
again as much as before for his death, if he had
seen me die; and should think he saw his son ex-
pire. The young prince was the idol of the
people; and when they heard his name mention-
ed, could not contain their transports. They
shouted, and expressed their joy in running and
jumping about. By the interpreter I learned,
that the chief requested I would stay with him,
for my presence would be a great satisfaction to
him. I very willingly consented, and remained
with him near a month; but being in a bad
way for cloaths, my uneasiness at being from the

garrison began to be perceived by him. He told the interpreter that he would detain me no longer, and was much obliged to me for staying with him so long, and would, on the next day, send two of his people to conduct me home. He made me several presents of curious skins: and we parted with regret. In three days I arrived at the fort; and nothing could equal the surprize of the officers and men, when they saw me again. Their curiosity was not to be satisfied, or allayed: for a party having been sent out to learn what was become of us, saw the spot where we had been attacked, and not finding me on the field along with the others who were slain, concluded I was taken prisoner by the savages, and should never be heard of again. With difficulty I persuaded the two Indians, my guides, to enter into the fort; but as they had seen their chief treat me with such respect and kindness, they depended upon me. A person was found who understood their language, and by him I told them how much I owed to their chief, and sent several little things by them, which I knew would be very acceptable to him. The Indians were detained for two days, and then departed, highly pleased at the reception they had met with, and the kindness with which they had been treated. I have the satisfaction to find since, that this incident has been the means of making those Indians our friends, who were formerly our enemies. The French, in some time after this, assisted the Indians; and skirmishes very frequently happened. In one of these I had the misfortune to be taken prisoner again; and after being detained in America for six or eight months, was sent to France. Havre
de

de Grace was the place of my confinement: where I had the liberty of walking about on my parol. This continued some time, and at length the governor invited me to dine with him: we seemed to like each other, and he told me he wished to render the place as agreeable as possible. Nothing was wanting on his side: he took me to a house he had a little way from the town, and left me there with his family. His confidence in me was very great; and I enjoyed every amusement the place could afford me. But still I was a prisoner: and sighed to get to England, where every thing that was dear to me remained, and to be at liberty again. Among other indulgences, the governor permitted me to go in a little open boat, along with two boys, into the harbour to fish; and sometimes to take a gun with me to shoot the sea fowl that should fall in my way. I had frequently been at sea, and returned again; and seemed to have lost all thoughts of obtaining my freedom, 'till, one day, going upon the party with the two boys, the wind blew so extremely fair and steady, that it inspired me with the hope of getting off. The island of Jersey appeared in sight: and telling the boys my design, and threatening to shoot the first that made the least opposition to my will, I took the helm, and, as I approached the island, was exulting in the success of my scheme. My heart bounded with joy, and I promised the two boys that they should either go home again, or stay at Jersey, and have the boat for themselves. I anticipated, in imagination, the pleasure I should have in embracing my beloved wife, and darling child, again. Thus engaged in pleasing reflection, I

thought nothing could prevent my hopes and wishes from being gratified: but, on a sudden, from behind a point of the island, a French dogger appeared in sight, bearing towards us. The boys exclaimed with joy that they should go home again, for they knew that she belonged to Havre. All my hopes vanished; and I had no other expectation, than being confined in a close dungeon when I got back again. She gained upon us every moment, and, at last, came up and took us on board. The boys related the matter as it happened, while I remained silent through vexation and disappointment. The master of the dogger used to look at me with a face of insolent pity, and shrug up his shoulders at different parts of the narration, as much as to say, "I am sorry for you." He bore away for Havre as fast as he could; but the wind being against him, he made but little way. I had by this time given up all thoughts of returning to England, and had abandoned myself entirely to despair. Evening came on, and we were still beating about to fetch the harbour, when a sail was espied at a distance, bearing towards us under the land. We soon found her to be one of those little privateers, which the inhabitants of Jersey fit out to pick up the smaller vessels of the enemy. By the course they stood, and our situation, it was impossible for us to get into the harbour away from them: the only chance we had for escaping them, was to stand out to sea: but in vain, for they gained upon us, and with heart-felt satisfaction I heard the Frenchmen talk of slackening sail, as it was impossible to avoid them. They were soon up with us, and I was again among my friends, and the

the next morning was landed on the island of Jersey. There was but little difficulty in getting a passage from thence to England, where I soon after arrived. You may suppose, that my eagerness to see my wife would not let me be easy till I was blessed in her arms. It is impossible to describe the joy we felt, the rapture we experienced. The good old gentleman welcomed me in the most cordial and affectionate manner. The whole family partook of our joy, which was nevertheless damped by the remembrance of my boy, who had died some time before. I had been absent from England above seven years: and in that time my lovely Nancy, who was five years younger than me, had attained her full perfection of beauty, and was more charming than ever. All my troubles, all my hardships, were forgotten in her presence; nothing but happiness and pleasure employed my thoughts. In a few days after my arrival, Mr. Cooke introduced a young gentleman of the name of Wells to me, who had, as he told me, in my absence treated my wife with much civility, and whose good wishes for me, as well as his own merit, recommended him strongly to my acquaintance. So great was my opinion of Mr. Cooke, that his speaking well of any body was sufficient to make me esteem him; and in many other cases, as well as in this, I have preferred his judgment to my own, though the consequence has proved me right. The study of physiognomy has been always one of my foibles, if I may call it so: and seldom have I been deceived in my prognosticks. But Mr. Wells's politeness and good nature got the better of all my scruples, and I condemned myself for judging

amiss of him, though, according to my notions of things, appearances were rather against him. He was possessed of a pretty fortune, and we were frequently invited to his house, which was in the neighbourhood; and as he was a bachelor, used, in return, to be almost always with us. I began to esteem him very much, and to think that science very bad and fallacious, that could, from particular exterior signs, which he could not help or be answerable for, induce me to think ill of so worthy a man.

Mr. Cooke's son, by his interest, was placed on board a man of war as a midshipman, and a neighbouring farmer of good repute had married the second daughter; so there were only two of Mr. Cooke's children unprovided for. He refused, in spite of all I could say to him, to take one farthing of the allowance I had made for my wife's board.—He said, she was not the less his daughter for being my wife, and that it was his duty to do for her as his child: that I had taken her without a fortune, and the least he could do was to maintain her in my absence. The time came about in which it was necessary to return to America to my regiment: but my wife being then big with child, I should have been much better pleased to have staid at home. A lucky incident procured me that privilege. A lieutenant in another regiment, which was to remain in England, whose uncle was colonel of that to which I belonged, and from whom he had great expectations, obtained leave to change, and applied to me for that purpose. The proposal was very readily embraced on my side, and the affair was concluded, to the great satisfaction of all parties. Before I joined my new regiment,
my

my dear Nancy was brought to-bed of a lovely girl. Mr. Cooke christened the child; and going to pray by a person who had got a dangerous fever, he fell sick, and soon after died.— This was a very severe stroke; not less so to me than my wife. In him I lost a father; for he always proved himself so to me. What was to be done?—His children were not to be turned out without a protector.—I determined, therefore, to support them myself, trusting in Providence to enable me to do as I wished by the children of a man whom I so truly loved. It was my misfortune to be placed in a very dear country; and a scarcity of provisions having raised the price of every thing, I found my pay, with the utmost frugality, incapable of supporting so large a family. This threw me into very great distress; and, what was still more shocking to me, was my informing my wife of this circumstance, as she would have concluded the addition to my expences, by taking her brother and sister, had thus reduced me, and it would have made her very unhappy. During our stay in this place, though it was a great distance from Mr. Wells's house, he came over three or four times to see us. We were very much pleased at seeing him; but his visits added to our expences: and though we were as frugal as possible, it fell heavy at last. Whenever he came, he generally staid three weeks or so, and lodged at the house of a man who was in trade in a good way in the town, whom he had been a long time acquainted with. Going backwards and forwards to see Mr. Wells, I got acquainted with this man, whose name was Butler. Mutual invitations passed between us, and we lived very sociably together.

My

My pride would not suffer me to make Wells acquainted with my affairs; and had I been ever so willing, he continually threw out hints before us of the losses he had sustained by a tenant's running away, or death of cattle, or something or another that always prevented my speaking to him upon that subject. One day, walking through the town with an aching heart and melancholy countenance after dinner, and going past Butler's shop, without having any design in doing so, he called me in.

"I was just going to make a glass of punch," said he, "and am very glad you are so luckily come to be partaker of it."

I thanked him, and was really obliged to him for his offer. It was a relief from my distracted thoughts. The punch was prepared, and we sat down to it. We chatted a while about the dearth of provisions, and the difficulty of living.—At last says Butler:

"This time is much harder upon you gentlemen of the army than any other rank of people. Your pay is so extremely small, and you are obliged to keep up the appearance necessary for your situation in life, that I am surprized how you contrive, especially when you have a family."

"We contrive to live, and that's all."

"Indeed, it is a melancholy consideration that it should be so; but you, whose generosity and good-nature have induced you to take and support your father-in-law's children, and go to such an extraordinary expence, deserve to be pitied. I have very often thought your case hard, and believe you have rather exceeded your pay in the maintenance of your family."

"Do

“ Do not be angry at what I am going to say : I
“ know the honest pride of a gentleman will not
“ always suffer him to divulge or make known
“ his distresses ; but other means will publish
“ them. I am going to make a proposal to you,
“ and do not be displeased at it. You know
“ that I am a bachelor, and have no family ;
“ have been a long time in business, and acquired
“ a good property ; have no particular person to
“ leave it to, and have a right to dispose of it
“ as I please : and it can never be better disposed
“ of than in relieving modest worth. Here is a
“ fifty pound note, sir, if you will do me the
“ favour to accept it, and just give me a memo-
“ randum for it, payable at any time you think
“ proper. Another thing—your family has oc-
“ casion for many things in my way : make no
“ scruple of sending to me. To have an oppor-
“ tunity of serving you, is all I wish for.”

Surprize and astonishment kept me dumb, or I should have stopped him.

“ I will have no excuses made,” said he, seeing me attempt to speak ; “ you must give
“ me leave to be a little arbitrary upon this occa-
“ sion. You must oblige me, indeed, Mr. Simp-
“ son, you must.”

It is unnecessary to repeat my acknowledgments for his unbounded generosity. I gave him my note for the money payable on demand ; and the conversation turned to other subjects. I determined to keep this transaction a secret from my wife ; and accordingly, by degrees, paid those little debts which I had been forced to contract with other people for different necessaries ; and as we wanted several things in Mr. Butler’s way, soon got pretty deep in his books. At this
time

time we saw one another more frequently than ever. I could not help shewing my gratitude to so disinterested a friend ; and he, from his regard for me, could not stay away from my apartments. This induced expence, and consequently was contrary to the plan of œconomy which I in vain attempted to pursue ; but it would have been the height of ingratitude, not to be pleased and happy at the sight of my friend and benefactor. His was the only house in the place where I used to go to ; and, of an evening, two or three neighbours would call in, and sit down to a game at whist. I refused to be of the party, knowing, that though I played the game as well as any of them, yet, being without money, it would not be right to sit down to play. Butler saw through my motives for refusing ; and calling me aside one day, told me I did wrong to deny myself any pleasure while it was in my power to enjoy it.

“ You should know your friends better,” said he. “ Why should you be without as much money as you have occasion for, while I have it to afford you ? Here,” said he, giving me a purse, “ you will find another fifty pounds. I know how you disposed of the last, and are, from your honesty and merit, most deserving of being helped forward in the world.”

I wanted the money, and found Butler so much my friend upon every occasion, that I made no scruple of taking it, giving him, as before, a note for the sum. After this there was no excuse for not joining in their parties, which I constantly did ; and being unfortunate at cards, generally lost. Butler continually encouraged me ; and by professions of regard, which I
had

had every reason to believe sincere, prevented me from thinking of the consequences of losing those sums continually, which, though small ones, began at length to drain my pocket. We were at last ordered to march to other quarters, and then I had another supply of twenty guineas from him. All these bounties were unasked for, unsolicited on my side, and intirely voluntary on his. I left that place with regret, where I had so unexpectedly met so good a friend. As our next quarters were not far distant from Mr. Wells's, he visited us very frequently, and, by every insinuating method in his power, strove to gain my confidence, which he succeeded in.—About six months after we were settled here, I received a letter from my worthy friend Mr. Butler, importing, that his affairs, by a sudden and unforeseen accident, were very much hurt; that not for his own sake more than mine did he lament the change; and had the world answered either his wishes or expectations, he should not have been necessitated to apply to me for the money which he had advanced me; informing me, at the same time, that my account with him for goods amounted to eighty pounds, and my notes to one hundred and twenty. Two hundred pounds was such a sum, that he might as well have asked me to pay the national debt as it. I grieved for my generous friend's misfortune, and really was more concerned for my inability to repay him, on his account, than at the reflection on my own miserable situation. The consequences were easily foreseen. The money must be got.—But how? was the question. I thought an application to my father, who might relent, would be attended with success: but it was not,
and

and his refusal was aggravated with insult.— Butler continued to press me in the strongest terms. This conflict in my breast, caused a visible alteration in my behaviour. My wife urged me to acquaint her with the cause of that melancholy and dejection which had so lately oppressed me: something extraordinary, she was sure, must have occasioned my being so much distressed and afflicted. The want of candour and mutual confidence, in people so intimately united, is frequently attended with the worst consequences: we both experienced it upon this occasion. Ashamed to acquaint her with my situation, as I had so ungenerously concealed it from her before, I attributed to natural causes the uneasiness she took so much notice of. But vain were my attempts to elude her inquiries. The gentle and affectionate manner in which she conjured me to inform her of whatever troubled me, and, at the same time, reproving me so tenderly for my want of confidence in her, at last induced me to reveal the whole affair; concluding with telling her, it was the only thing I had ever kept a secret from her, and had not done so upon this occasion, but through fear of her reproaching herself and her family for being the cause of this embarrassment in my affairs. I begged her forgiveness, and assured her, that I never would, for the future, conceal any thing from her knowledge, as our interest was one.— She remained silent.

“ Ah! Nancy,” said I, “ is it so difficult to persuade you to pardon the only fault I have ever committed with regard to you?”

“ No,” replied she, “ there is no difficulty in persuading me to forgive you: but I cannot so easily

“ easily forgive myself. I have been culpable :
“ but there are many excuses for me.”

This speech went to my heart. “ Thou wert
“ ever perfection itself in my eyes. In what hast
“ thou offended, Nancy ?”

She answered, by informing me, “ That in
“ the life-time of her father she had some no-
“ tions that Wells had unwarrantable designs
“ against her peace and honour : but having no-
“ thing more than bare suspicion to found a com-
“ plaint on, she forbore to acquaint her father
“ with her thoughts, tho’ she imagined Wells’s
“ frequent visits, and professions of friendship to
“ him and his family, were not without interested
“ views. No farther insight was had into this
“ affair till after Mr. Cooke’s death ; and when
“ he came to visit us, as he so frequently did, he
“ grew more particular to her, expressed his sor-
“ row at her situation in life : that it was a
“ shocking thing so charming a woman should be
“ only a poor lieutenant’s wife : that had he seen
“ her before she was married, he would have
“ been proud to have placed her in a more ele-
“ vated station, that would have given her beauty
“ a greater chance of being seen, and her vir-
“ tues adored. By attempting to make her dis-
“ contented with her situation, he thought to
“ make her hate me, as the cause of her being
“ poor and so distressed. That it was out of his
“ power to do,” said she, “ embracing me,
“ my heart was always yours. He still grew
“ more and more particular to me, and I threat-
“ ened frequently to acquaint you with his be-
“ haviour ; which I certainly should have done,
“ but I dreaded your rage : and a matter of this
“ kind being known, does no good to a wo-
“ man’s

“man’s character, though she is as virtuous and
“innocent as an angel. Finding he could not
“get me to listen to him, he has certainly laid a
“trap for you; and it is my opinion, that this
“is all a scheme between Wells and Butler to
“ruin you.”

“Thou utterest the words of truth, and con-
“viction follows them. Thou art certainly
“right, my adorable Nancy. It is a pit that
“has been dug for me, and I have fallen into it.
“Had’st thou told me before of that villain’s in-
“tentions, I should have avoided both him and
“his connections: but I will not attempt to re-
“proach thee.”

“This is only a notion of mine,” said she,
“and perhaps may be nothing but a notion:
“yet Butler is a man of very bad character,
“though your prepossession in his favour would
“never suffer you to listen to any thing, how-
“ever true, that was said against him. But I
“suppose Wells will be here soon, and then we
“may be able to reduce this matter to a cer-
“tainty. In the mean time, you must give
“me your absolute promise not to take any
“notice to him that you are acquainted with
“this matter, or make me unhappy, by exposing
“your precious life, and my character, in a con-
“test with him.”

I, to make her easy, promised every thing she
required. Another letter came from Butler, in
which he was more urgent than ever; and the
next day Wells arrived. I saw through the con-
trivance, and, as it had been preconcerted, gave
him an opportunity of entertaining my wife. He
began with asking her, as she afterwards in-
formed me, what was the cause of her melan-
choly?

choly?—He was grieved to the heart by her want of spirits. She artfully discovered something of the affair; which made him more earnest with her to induce her to tell him the whole story. She did so; concluding it by saying, “That she had a right to confide in a man who was so good a friend of her father’s, and who had shewn so much regard for her.” Captivated with this profession of her esteem for him, artful as he was, his cunning forsook him, and he told her, that if she would accept it, he had just the sum of two hundred pounds by him, and would send it to her the next day.

“You had better send it,” said she, “to your friend Mr. Butler: he wants it, and that will prevent his being so pressing on Mr. Simpson.”

“No, angelic creature!” replied he, kissing one of her hands, “he wants it not. Be kind to my wishes, and you shall have this two hundred pounds, and be intirely freed from Butler’s demands.”

“But how can you say, Mr. Wells, that Butler does not want it? Did not he lend the money?”

“He did: but it was money I gave him for the purpose. You see, charming woman! what love can make a man do. You know that I have adored you a long time. Return my passion, and be happy yourself: my whole fortune shall be laid at your feet.”

“Stop, sir, I want to hear no more. I have the most perfect contempt for you and your proposals, and only desired to find out the cause of your vile agent’s pretended generosity. It
“is

“ is sufficiently explained : you had better retire
“ now as fast as you can, and take care of your
“ safety ; for Mr. Simpson is already acquainted
“ with your former behaviour to me, and the
“ moment he comes in I shall inform him of
“ what has passed between us now ; and it will be
“ prudent in you to avoid meeting an injured
“ husband.”

“ So you think,” said he, interrupting her,
“ to intimidate me from my pursuit : but you are
“ much mistaken ; and shall feel the weight of
“ my resentment, and curse your haughty pride,
“ when reduced to the extremity of want.”

I am interrupted, and must break off.—
Believe me yours,

EDWARD SIMPSON.

LET.

LETTER XXXIV.

To CHARLES HORTON, Esq.

In Continuation.

WELLS retired after this rebuke, muttering threats and curses. We now saw our destruction was determined, and the means were in the hands of our enemies. My last resource was selling my commission, if I could get leave. The colonel of the regiment obtained it for me, because he had a relation whom he wanted to put in my room. I accordingly sold out upon halfpay. Butler's demand was discharged, and I resolved to go to France, where, it was probable, I could live upon my half-pay, and the small remainder of the purchase money of my commission. My wife's brother was taken away from us by an uncle, who had no children of his own; and tho' he had formerly quarrelled with his brother, upon our representation, took his son, with an intention to provide for him. I resolved to take my wife's sister along with us, as she would be company for her sister in a country of strangers, and whose language she scarcely understood. We got to France; and, fixing upon one of the cheapest countries, settled at A——. For the space of a year we were as happy as our restricted circumstances would permit us; and we did not complain or murmur.

Our

Our sweet little infant repaid all our troubles with her smiles and innocent endearments, and our happiness centered entirely in ourselves. The first interruption it had, was the loss of our sister, whom a malignant fever carried off. My little girl also took the small-pox, but had it so favourably, that we could not be thankful enough to heaven for preserving a life that was so dear to us, and in which all our pleasure lay. The expenses attending these illnesses reduced my little stock, but we lived more frugally to make amends. The loss of her sister had made a great impression on my wife's spirits; and I was much afraid that she would not have got over it. In order to dissipate her melancholy, I introduced her into more company than she had kept before. The natural politeness of the French made them agreeable to her, and *la belle Anglaise* was welcome every where: besides, company was now more interesting and amusing to her, as she began to speak the language with great fluency. My darling Nancy! my lovely scholar! thou comforter of my afflictions, thou reward of all my troubles! my heart yet beats with rapture at hearing thee named, and my aged eyes overflow with tears when I recollect thy virtues. Oh, Horton, Horton, she was lovely among ten thousand! Charming as she was, the delight of every eye, and the wish of every heart, yet her humility, her affability and goodness, exceeded her personal perfections. How often have I, when her little smiling cherub lay playing in her lap, seen the beams of maternal love and affection dart from her lovely eyes, till, warmed with and enamoured of the sight, I have strained the charming mother and the beauteous infant, by turns,

to

to my breast—till my heart overflowing with feelings too delicate to describe, the tear of rapture has started from my eye; and never did I envy my brother the wealth he possessed, but as it prevented my placing my wife in a station that she would dignify. Forgive me for digressing: I will pursue my story. Among those to whom we were introduced, in our going into company, was the Count de B——: he had a seat in the neighbourhood, and came down sometimes to hunt there. His surprize at seeing my wife was very great, and vented itself in a profusion of compliments, which I attributed more to the constant gallantry of the French, than any other reason. He seemed mightily pleased with our little one: and appeared without that pride and haughtiness which is generally inseparable from persons of his rank. He was about forty: a fine shape, an air of dignity, and an agreeable face, added to an elegant expression, and much wit, rendered him, exclusive of his being a man of fashion, a very desirable acquaintance, and an entertaining companion. He begged to be received among our friends: and, in consequence of telling him how great an honour we should esteem it, he visited us frequently. The attention he paid to my wife, I thought nothing of particularly; as it was no more than what he paid to every other woman who fell in his way. It was his custom, whenever he came into the country, to give an entertainment at his castle to the ladies, which generally lasted two or three days. This year it was celebrated with uncommon magnificence: and, as we were strangers, the Count and his guests treated us with great politeness and civility. To that cause alone I attributed the
respect

respect which was shewn to us: but there was another, and a fatal cause. The Count was deeply enamoured of my wife. On our return from the castle, she discovered it to me. "How-
" ever disagreeable," said she, " his unmean-
" ing gallantry might have been to me, that
" was to be tolerated: but," added she, with
tears in her eyes, " his designs are too apparent
" to pass unnoticed. What can we do? We
" must fly this place, and escape from him."

" By no means," I replied: " the husband's
" arm is the shield of his wife. You shall still
" remain here, and in safety. His attempt at
" seduction is vain, and he dares not offer
" violence."

" Ah, Mr. Simpson, how will you be able
" to combat his fortune, and his power?"

" Fear not, my love, there will be no occa-
" sion to enter into competition with either."

The Count visited us as usual: but he was not awed or restrained by the coolness with which I received him, or the contempt my wife, on every occasion, shewed him. With an invincible assurance, he persisted to take no notice of either; and still, whenever he had the least opportunity, pressed his suit to my wife. She so frequently requested me to quit that place, and remove to some other, that I began to consent, to put an end to her uneasiness. The Count had no thoughts of returning to Paris, while we were in the country: and he remained there, only for the purpose of pursuing his dishonourable purpose. Our dear little girl was now six years old, and fair as an angel. The Count, with all his possessions, envied me the happiness I enjoyed in my wife; and determined to destroy it. It only
belongs

belongs to age to be hardened in wickedness. A young man may, thro' heat of blood, be tempted to commit irregularities, and be guilty of crimes; but his reason soon comes to his aid, and he is ashamed of what he has done. An old man is obstinate and tenacious in villainy. I saw very plainly, that the Count found my presence a restraint upon his amour with my wife: and me, not so entirely an English, or rather a French husband, as he would have me. He could not help himself; and was obliged to submit with a good grace. One evening, talking of the effects of the *belle passion* in different people, he advanced, as his opinion, that the French were the only nation who were properly or truly susceptible of love, and expressed it in a feeling and natural manner. I opposed his argument, not more from a conviction of truth, than a pique against him; as his design was very evident in his manner of speaking, and his meaning easily to be understood. Words ran high; and though he took no immediate notice, it was plain that he departed very much chagrined.—“The storm is gathering,” said my dear prophetic wife; ah, but too truly so!—“and we must shun its fury.” I agreed in opinion with her: and considered, that we were but strangers, and that this man's interest would destroy me, should I take any methods to right myself. The willow, that bends to the blast, is unhurt; while the sturdy oak, that opposes it, is torn up by the roots. “We will depart from this place, my love, and speedily,” said I. “The Count shall not be able to find us again. Our retreat shall elude his utmost vigilance, and strictest inquiry, to trace our flight.” Our place of retreat was

already fixed upon, and advice given to my agent in England where to remit my pay. We rejoiced in our fancied security, and all proper means were taken to depart as privately as possible, when, the evening but one before that on which we had appointed to escape the Count's persecution, word was brought me, that a gentleman wanted to speak to me at the door. I desired he might be introduced. He could not come in—it was but a word he had to say to me. I rose from a comfortable supper. I was enjoying with my wife and child, accordingly went to the door, and was shewn to the person who wanted to speak to me. He drew me on one side, and whispered me, that I was a state prisoner; at the same time producing the *lettre de cachet*. I was struck speechless; and every horrible idea arose in my mind. The shock was too great. I fell, senseless, into the messenger's arms who had announced my fate. When their care had brought me to myself, I was far from home, in a carriage hastening to a prison, where I had reason to suppose I should be buried during the remainder of my life. But that was nothing to the dreadful recollection of being thus torn away from every thing that was dear to me in this life;—from my wife; from my child. Gracious heaven! what my sufferings were in that horrid hour of distress, thou art a witness. For what wise purpose, thou hast reserved me, I know not; nor do I wish to inquire. Thy will be done. Think, Horton, of my situation: of a man jealous of his honour, the natural defender of his wife, snatched from her in the moment she had the greatest need of his assistance, to rescue her from the insults of a villain; and, at the same time, to be obliged to

leave

leave her in the power of that villain. It was too much to bear. My child too, my lovely child; to leave her also in the hands of strangers! I could not retain my senses, and think of it any longer. A delirium seized me, and a violent fever followed it. For nine weeks I was in such a state, that it was uncertain whether I should live or die. A good constitution overcame the violence of the distemper, and I recovered. It was near a month after before it was possible to remove me; and then I was so extremely weak, that we were obliged to travel by very short stages, and very slowly, or I should have expired on the road. Would to heaven it had been so! then I should not have suffered the inexpressible anguish that has since been my portion. The person in whose custody I was, informed me, that I was arrested as a spy: that was all he had permission to tell me, or that he knew himself. At length I was conveyed to the Bastile, where I remained seven years. As it is totally impossible to describe to you my misery in that dismal place, I shall pass it over in silence; only observing, that it is a matter of very great wonder to me that I have lived so long. The hand of Providence, I hope, has preserved me for happiness at last. The greatest uneasiness I felt, was in the uncertainty I laboured under, and which it was totally impossible to remove, in regard to my family, and what was become of them; and which they must equally suffer with me. I leave you to conceive my misery, for it is impossible to describe it. The days and years of unutterable woe that I endured, cannot be related.

My release was equally as unexpected, and as sudden, as my confinement. The keeper came to me one morning, and told me I was free; and produced an order at the same time, from the secretary of state, commanding me to leave Paris in so many hours, and the kingdom in a certain number of days, and not to be seen in it again, under pain of death. Turned into the streets in a strange place, without money, without friends, or even acquaintance, what could I do? My time was limited; and I was obliged to obey the commands I had received. My first care was, to inquire whether there was an English ambassador at Paris; and, to my great satisfaction, learned there was. The Duke of R—— was, at that time, the representative of the English nation. A nobleman, whose goodness of heart, and public spirit, are only excelled by his capacity, and assiduity in public business. That was fully evinced when he was minister here, and in a public character abroad. It was rather difficult, in the habit I then was, to get admission to him: but telling his servant to acquaint him that I was an Englishman, and just released from the Bastile, his humanity induced him to see me. I told him my situation, and who I was; where I had been; for what confined; and how released. He asked me, acknowledging at the same time that he did not doubt my assertions, whether I might not have been mistaken in the account I had given of my family. I assured him I had not: and gave him such proofs of it, that his suspicions vanished. “Then, Sir,” said he, taking me by the hand, “I have reason to congratulate you on your accession to your father’s fortune, and your brother’s title, who was

“created

"created a baronet. He died without issue; "and you are now entitled to his estate. You "are the person, whom your uncle, lord L——, "has been searching for so long in vain. You "shall spend this day with me." I told his grace my stay in Paris was limited. "Well then," said he, "stay as long as you can: but give me "leave to offer you some necessaries, till you can "get to England." He put me under the hands of his valet, who gave me a plain suit of the duke's cloaths; and provided me with linen, which I very much wanted. After dinner, the duke supplied me with cash; and I set off for England as fast as I could. When I arrived in London, my first inquiries were at my agent's, to know if he had heard any thing of my wife. But he had not, nor had there been any tidings of her, to his knowledge, since we left England together. He corroborated the reports I had heard of the death of my father and brother: and that night I wrote to my uncle an account of my arrival, and the reason that I was not to be found before. His answer was affectionate; and his conduct, with regard to me, generous and honest. I found myself possessed of a large estate unencumbered; a title; and a sum of ready money, exceeding my utmost expectations. But of what use are they to me? I have lost every thing that was valuable to me upon earth. Three several messengers have been dispatched to France, to make inquiries after my wife; but never could get any satisfactory intelligence of her. I have done every thing in my power to recover that jewel, the possession of which can only bestow happiness on me. I have therefore changed my name, dropped my title, and live as you know I have done for some time past. I have been above six years in England; and, in that time, have never got the least

account of her my soul loves, nor of my dear daughter. What is become of them, heaven best knows; and the only comfortable reflection that offers, is, that the Protector of innocence and virtue will shield them from danger.

This then, Horton, is the history of my unhappy life: replete with misery, and only diversified by a variety of misfortunes. Nor is my situation at present, though I am possessed of wealth, more comfortable. My poor old heart, accustomed to adore one lovely and deserving object, can now form no new connection. An aching void remains never to be occupied but by herself, or her daughter. The uncertainty I am in, with regard to their fate, fills my soul with horror. Perhaps my virtuous, my adorable wife, was the victim of brutal force. Perhaps my helpless daughter, my well-beloved child, is trained to a course of prostitution. Wretched, wretched father, that I am! This thought distracts me all the day, and returns to my dreams at night. I am most miserable. Do you any longer wonder at the severity of my expressions, or the harshness and sourness of my temper? Can it be supposed that I can love mankind, when I have suffered so much, and so undeservedly, from them? I had recourse to my favourite study of physiognomy; and found, in your face, the marks of a good heart: let me not be deceived.

When you read this history, which I charge you never to reveal, consider how amiable, how delightful a contrast my much lamented wife is, to those women whom you have mentioned. I reposed a proper confidence in her: I trusted her with my honour and happiness; and, like a faithful

faithful guardian, she kept it safe. Had my presumption induced me to make a trial of her virtue before I had married her, I dare say she would have had too just a sense of the indignity offered her, ever to marry me afterwards. And who could blame her? Not,

Thy friend

EDWARD SIMPSON.



L E T T E R X X X V .

TO EDWARD SIMPSON, Esq.

Sir,

AS you have been, for some time, Mr. Charles Horton's chief correspondent, for I am ashamed to call him my son, it is to be presumed that he has acquainted you with his motions and designs. If so, I must request the favour of you to let me know where he is, and the surest method of finding him out. Had he departed alone, you would not have been troubled with this letter: but he, and one of his abandoned companions, have seduced, or rather forced, a young lady from my house: for well am I convinced, she never went willingly. Almost any other outrage, had been forgiven him:

for I was bound, by the strongest ties of honour and humanity, as well as the request of a dying mother, to protect her who had no friends. But had not this been the case, the sweetness of her disposition, and the beauty of her person, would have endeared her to any body. Her, this unworthy boy has taken from under my roof, and for the vilest purposes, I fear. Therefore, Sir, if you can give me any intelligence of him, you will perhaps save an innocent creature from ruin; for, I cannot harbour the least suspicion that you are an accomplice in his crime; and very much oblige

Your humble servant,

THOMAS HORTON.

LET.

LETTER XXXVI.

To Sir THOMAS HORTON, Bart.

SIR,

YOU only do me justice. I affirm solemnly, that I am neither an accomplice with Mr. Horton, nor know where he is: if I did, there are no obligations, by which he might bind me to secrecy, that would prevent my acquainting you where he was, and serving at once the cause of virtue and honour. And truly sorry I am, that your son has deceived my hopes and good opinion so much. 'Tis true, he acquainted me with his passion for this deserving young lady; but never did he inform me of his intention to carry her off.

But your letter, Sir, has made me once more indulge a flattering hope, that had almost forsaken me. I am a father, a distressed father, who for thirteen years have been lost to my child. A wretched husband, who was torn away from his wife at that period. Interested as your heart is in the cause of humanity, this confession of my situation will induce you, if no family reasons prevent it, to give me the satisfaction of knowing how this young lady came under your protection. Perhaps, Sir,—excuse the vain hopes of a distracted father, she may be my long-lost child. But whether

your answer gives me that satisfaction I hope for, or not, I will desire your son, if he can any way be discovered, to whom I have imparted the history of my unhappy life, to acquaint you with my reasons. Let me entreat the favour of you to grant my request; and be assured, that the most warrantable curiosity induces me to ask this at your hands. I am very truly, Sir,

Your most humble Servant,

EDWARD SIMPSON.

LET

LETTER XXXVII.

TO EDWARD SIMPSON, Esq.

S I R,

YOUR request is reasonable, and I have no family reasons to prevent my gratifying your curiosity. It is laudable: and if it should turn out, that I have done your child any service, it would make me doubly happy.

It is now near fourteen years ago, since I was entrusted with the execution of a commission in a very extraordinary affair. What it was is totally immaterial; as it has no relation to the adventure I am about to discover to you, which happened on my journey. In my road to Italy, I was obliged to pass through France, it being absolutely necessary for the completion of my business. As it was something like a public affair that I was employed in, proper passports were provided for my admission into every town through which my road lay; so that I might travel either with the greatest expedition, or take my own time, as was most agreeable. I had transacted the principal part of my business in France, and was preparing to leave it, in order to go to Turin. In my way I stopped at the town of A——. It was in the morning of a hot day: and being determined to take some rest, lay by there till the evening. The nights were more agreeable to travel in, and full as safe as the day: for my servants were all well armed,

armed, and trusty fellows. The sun had descended, and the cool breeze of the evening began to refresh the earth, when I ordered my chaise to be got ready; and, inquiring the road out, walked on alone, desiring the carriages to follow, as they would soon overtake me.—Walking on gently, and enjoying the exhilarating coolness of the evening, I had got out of the town, and perceived at the door of an house, that was detached about half a quarter of a mile from the rest, a beautiful child about five or six years old. Her appearance struck me; for she did not seem to be a native of France, either by her dress or her complexion. She was crying too: that engaged me still more. I stopped to look at her. “Poor soul,—I wonder what can cause thy distress?—what can she cry so for?” I spoke aloud; and the child, surprised to hear any one there speak English to her, looked at me with her eyes full of tears, and told me, that her papa was gone away, and her mamma had been crying ever since. “Where is your mamma, my love?” said I, taking her by the hand.

“At home,” said she; “and there’s an ugly Frenchman there too.”

She is a countrywoman, no doubt, and may be in distress: but whether she is or not, she will not be displeased at seeing an Englishman so far from her own country. These were my thoughts: and, turning to the child, “Will you shew me the way to your mamma, my dear?”

“Yes,” said she: and, as I still retained her hand, led me to a back parlour, furnished more in the English fashion than I had before seen in France. But there was no time to make observations of that nature. At the farther end of the room,

room, a beautiful woman was on her knees to a French gentleman very richly dressed, holding up her hands in the most supplicating manner. Her look, which bespoke terror, and the tears which poured from her eyes, shewed the extremity of distress. Her dress was disordered, and seemed to be discomposed by force. "You

"know where my husband is: tell me, I beseech you, where I shall find him, and then—"

My appearance interrupted her. She started from her knees, and speaking in English—"But heaven has sent me assistance," said she. Attempting to come across the room, her strength failed her, and she sunk into a chair. The Frenchman, whom I have since learned was the count de B—, turned hastily about; and, in an imperious manner, demanded from whence I came, and what I wanted there.

"To assist that lady," answered I, coolly: "she seems to want assistance."

"None, but what I can give her. And your interrupting me in this affair, is not consistent with your appearance as a gentleman."

"Oh, Sir," said the lady, recovering herself, "this vile man has sent my husband, who is an Englishman, away; where, I know not, nor will he tell me; but it is only for the worst of purposes, which the presence of my husband prevented his completing. You providentially came in the moment he had almost effected my destruction. Do not then, I conjure you, leave me in his power."

"I will not, Madam," said I, going towards her: "depend upon every assistance that I can give you."

The Count interposed, "You must not have any thing to say to that lady."

"That

“That is language I am not accustomed to hear, much less to bear. Your opposition is vain: for I must and will speak to her, and defend her from the insults of any man.”

As he opposed my going to her a second time, I pushed him away; and, taking her by the hand, begged her to be composed; assuring her, at the same time, that I would not forsake her in affliction; but would do every thing in my power to serve her. The Count interrupted me: “Draw,” said he, and defend yourself:—“the affront you have given me is not to be forgiven, nor to be atoned or washed away but by your blood. Once more, I call upon you to defend yourself.”

His advice was too good to be despised; as he had his sword in his hand: and to parley with him, when in a capacity of defending myself, was much the surer way. “My blood will be honourably spilt in the cause of innocence and virtue. To defend my countrywoman is another claim on me, Sir. You have injured her, and you know it: restore her husband, and cease your unjustifiable pursuits. Are these demands contrary to justice or honour?”

“I care not,” replied he: “nor will I suffer you to make those demands. Guard yourself: you are an insolent villain.”

He made a furious pass at me, which I happily avoided. The lady shrieked, and fainted away. The child ran to her. There was no possibility of retreating far; and giving the Count some time to cool, or hear reason. His fury blinded his judgment. I retired from him, till I could go no farther; and then his desperate
desire

desire of revenge, not to be appeased but with my life, provoked me; and, in my own defence, was obliged to strive to disable him. I had wounded him slightly, which only served to exasperate him more: he was determined to kill me if he could; and all my business was, to prevent it. A fatal thrust, at last, brought him to the ground. "Englishman," said he, "you have killed me: but I suffer justly. I have injured this woman, and wronged her husband. Forgive me my offences, gracious heaven. I will make what reparation I can. Her husband, by my contrivance, is sent to the —." His voice failed him, and he could utter nothing but inarticulate sounds, till he expired, which happened in a few moments. Though I wished to have known where the gentleman was sent to, and thought some of his domesticks might have been acquainted with it; yet this was no longer a place of safety for me. I turned to the lady, and recovered her: but seeing the Count lying weltering in blood, she fainted again. With much difficulty I brought her to herself.

"Good God! what will become of me! what shall I do!" said she. "I shall be accounted the murderer of this wretched man."

"You had better put yourself under my protection, Madam." I acquainted her with my name, and family; and told her where I was going. She consented; and, taking a little trunk containing some linen, told me she was ready. At that moment my carriage appeared in sight. By my advice we locked up all the doors; and putting her and the child into the chaise, we drove off

off as fast as we could. I changed my route as soon as possible, and got out of France undiscovered. The haste we were under an absolute necessity of making, as well as the distressed situation of the lady, prevented my asking her any questions, or inquiring how she came into the situation in which I found her. At length we got into a place of safety; and then I entreated the favour of her to let me know how she came into that part of France. She very willingly indulged my curiosity.

“ My husband’s name, if he lives, is Somerton:—is an officer upon half-pay, and prudential reasons obliged us to quit England. We had lived with great content and happiness at A——, till the Count de B——, who fell so unfortunately by your hand, came down to his seat, which is in the neighbourhood of that place. He acquainted me with the passion he had conceived for me; and, at an entertainment he gave soon after his arrival in the country, attempted, by promises and threats, to shake my conjugal fidelity. He attempted in vain. My heart, wholly attached to my hapless husband, could never swerve. On the first opportunity I told him the danger that threatened us, and warned him to shun the impending storm. Alas! too confident, he would not take my advice, and fatal has been the consequence. He did, at last, intend to have sought security, in flying from the place where the detested Count had attempted to dishonour us: he had taken, as he informed me, every necessary precaution for departing so privately, that we should not be found out again. But the night before that

“ on

“ on which we had fixed to go away, he was torn from me, I fear, for ever.” A flood of tears, at the melancholy recollection, prevented her pursuing her tale for a time: but recovering her spirits, she went on.

“ We were enjoying our little frugal supper in peace and comfort, and indulging the hopes of getting speedily out of the power of the Count, when the servants brought him word, that there was a gentleman at the door wanted to speak to him. He refused coming in: and Mr. Sommerton, from a suspicion of what might happen, went, I believe, very reluctantly out to him. That was the last sight I had of the dear partner of my heart. What became of him I know not. I waited for his return with great impatience, and then sent the servant to see where he was. Not finding him, I went out myself; but could hear or see nothing of him. My fears and distress are not to be described, especially when he did not return that night. I sent about among the neighbours, but got no satisfactory answers to any of my inquiries. My suspicions lighted upon the Count, and I very justly supposed that he had got him murdered, or sent out of the way somewhere or another. The next evening he came to the house. I saw him at a distance, and desired to be denied to him; and declared I would not see him. Three days elapsed before I saw him again, and then he came abruptly into the parlour, where I was sitting, lamenting over my poor child, thus deprived at once of all her friends in her father, and stood before me. I screamed out, and would have escaped from him; but he
“ held

"held me fast, and made me sit down by him.
"I called the servant."

"You may save yourself the trouble of calling your servant," said he; "I met her going towards the town."

"Good heaven! then I am betrayed."

"You may be very happy if you choose it, madam. I live but to make you so."

"Restore me my husband then, if you wish to contribute to my happiness."

"That may be impossible by this time."

"Then he is murdered."

"He assured me he was very safe: but supposed some affair of state had been the cause of his being taken away in that abrupt manner. He did every thing to compose and satisfy me: but in vain. He pleaded his detested passion, which I treated with just indignation and contempt. In the mean time my little Juliet had strayed to the door, where you found her. The Count, at last, could contain himself no longer, and proceeded to violences, that are equally shocking to think of or relate. I was on my knees imploring his mercy, when you came so fortunately to my rescue. The rest you know: But you can never know the obligations I am under to you, for preserving my honour and my peace."

I endeavoured to console the lovely mourner; and assured her, as soon as I arrived in England, that all in my power should be done to find out her husband, and to settle her.

"Ah, Sir," said she, "I shall never revisit England. The sorrows I have so lately experienced, and which came so fast upon the heels of each other, have affected me beyond

expression.

"expression. I feel the springs of life fail me,
"and very soon shall be numbered with the
"dead."

My attempts to banish her melancholy were fruitless. She would go to no public place in order to dissipate her chagrin. In talking of herself she said, that neither she, nor should I let the Count's death trouble our consciences. "It had
"not happened" added Mrs. Sommerton, "if
"he had not seduced my servant, and sent her
"out of the way, with an intention of com-
"pleting his designs on me." With grief I saw the poor lady's health decline visibly every day. Nothing that could be done to relieve her was omitted. The best physicians that could be procured, attended her. The disorder baffled the power of medicine: it was a broken heart. Her distress affected, her situation shocked me: she had, by her manner and behaviour, interested my heart in her behalf: and I would have given half my fortune, to have restored her husband to her: but that was not possible. She was at last confined to her bed: and there were very little hopes of her living another day. The physician who had given her over acquainted me, as he took his leave, that she desired to speak to me. I attended instantly in her chamber. She was almost exhausted: but, notwithstanding, beckoned to me to come near her: and I sat down on the bed-side. She took my hand between hers. "I praise heaven," said she, "that
"in this hour, I retain my senses, and have an
"opportunity of returning you those thanks you
"so much merit, and which are so poor a re-
"ward for the services you have rendered me.
"Though I cannot, yet the God who protects
"the

“ the fatherless and the widow, will reward you:
 “ but from my soul I thank you, Sir Thomas ;”
 and she pressed my trembling hand to her poor
 chilled lips. My eyes refused not the tribute of
 humanity. I sobbed and wept aloud. She re-
 covered herself: “ None but an Englishman
 “ could be capable of such exalted, such disin-
 “ terested generosity : I have experienced your
 “ goodness and humanity, and therefore shall
 “ die contented, in leaving my poor dear Juliet
 “ in your care. Give me the satisfaction of
 “ hearing you promise not to forsake this helpless
 “ orphan.”

I assured her solemnly that I would treat her as
 my own : that she should be the child of my
 bosom.

“ Poor lamb,” said she, turning her dying
 eyes on the charming little one as she stood weep-
 ing by her bed-side, “ into what a world of
 “ wolves, ready to devour thee, art thou turned
 “ forth !”

“ Not if I can prevent it,” said I, snatching
 the child in my arms, and pressing her to my
 bosom. A ray of heart-felt satisfaction reani-
 mated, for a moment, the dying mother’s pallid
 face.

“ Shall not I be your papa, my dear ?”
 said I.

“ Yes,” said Juliet, “ for I have lost my own
 “ papa.”

The unhappy lady could not bear this. “ I
 “ find,” said she, “ my dissolution approaches
 “ fast. To your protection I commit that help-
 “ less babe : breed her in the paths of virtue and
 “ honour : let her know her forlorn state, that
 “ she may entertain no flattering hopes that will

“ ruin

"ruin and destroy her. Farewel, my good friend, may heaven so reward you, as you deal by the trust I repose in your hands."

"Amen!" said I, fervently, retiring from her room; for the pangs of death came fast upon her, and I hurried with the little Juliet from the scene of horror. In a few hours after word was brought me, that she was no more. I went to her room, and kissing her face, yet lovely in death, repeated my vow to protect her little one. She was buried by a clergyman who was along with me; and as soon as the ceremony was performed, I pursued my journey; and, at Leghorn, took shipping for England: where I arrived without any accident. The dear little Juliet was the entertaining companion of my voyage; and so much had she engaged my affections by her innocent endearments, that my regard for her was little less than for my own child. To prevent her meeting any disagreeable reflections, should it be known that she was an entire stranger to my family, and dependant upon me, the mistress of a boarding school where I placed her was informed that she was a distant relation of mine, whose father and mother being both dead, had left her under my care. Yet not willing to trust her to any person, she was soon brought home, and educated under my own eye. It was known that the Nicolls's were related to me; and under the name of Harriet Nicolls, and a distant cousin, she was received at Elwood. As she grew up, her mother became every day more visible in her countenance, and every day more endeared to me. A worthy lady, a sister of my late wife, who lives with me, has superintended her education: nothing has been spared to make it perfect.

fect. With infinite satisfaction I saw my lovely charge, exceed my most sanguine expectations: She had received those instructions from my sister, that served to make her a good and worthy member of society, though not a fine lady. Nevertheless, she had every necessary accomplishment. Possessed of every requisite to make a man happy, it came into my head, that if by any means I could bring about a match between my son and her, it would be attended with the happiest consequences to him. We did not want alliance with wealth, for we were rich enough: and the disagreeable consequences attending the union with high blood, frequently outweighed the advantages. Charles might, if he would, be happy with Juliet. His wildness was not unknown to me: but his enemies accused him not of wickedness or villainy. "Let him go on," said I to myself, "he will soon be tired of the life he at present leads. His practice carries safety along with it. The roving butterfly will at last settle on the breast of this sweet rose." Thence it was that I never desired him to come to Elwood, and ever denied myself the satisfaction of having him so often and so much with me as I wished, and refused myself that gratification but to ensure his future felicity. Since he has been here, I have reason to believe his inclinations have acted in concert with my designs: his surprize, on their first meeting, was very preceptible; and I am much mistaken if they have not since understood each other. But this sad boy has undone my peace, and counterworked and blown up all my good schemes, by his precipitate folly and wickedness; and has ruined himself in my good opinion. To make this disagreeable affair too public,

lic, would give a mortal wound to the girl's character: and whatever my fears may be, yet my knowledge of Juliet's virtue, and my hopes that Charles is not so wicked as he is wild and unthinking, give me some small room to imagine, that this affair will terminate better than is expected. I should beg your pardon for troubling you with this very long letter: but it is natural to seize every opportunity of unburthening an heart that is in affliction; and your desire to be informed, of the circumstances, which this acquaints you with, may also serve as an apology for it. I shall be in town in three or four days at farthest, and will consult with you the best methods of finding out where this boy is; and have the pleasure of assuring you I am, with great truth,

Sir, your very humble servant,

THOMAS HORTON.

LET-

LETTE XXXVIII.

To Sir THOMAS HORTON.

BUT that you are determined to come so shortly to London, I had been, ere this, at Elwood, to kiss the hands of my benefactor: doubly so to me, as he has preserved the honour of my wife, and been the father and protector of my daughter. I, Sir, am that Sommerton, who, unable to enjoy either, have concealed both his fortune and title from the world he despised. I shall defer my thanks, and the acknowledgment of my obligations to you, till I have the pleasure of seeing you at my house; which you must make your own while you stay in town. My joy, which would otherwise be tumultuous, is checked by my uncertainty concerning my poor Juliet's present situation: yet I am not entirely without hopes, that Mr. Horton will act nobly by her. His reason is blinded, and his judgment led astray, by false principles, unhappily imbibed in his unrestricted intercourse with a corrupted world. Yet I tremble for my child: and though she may escape the hand of violence, yet she may fall a prey to the arts of seduction: this is what is most to be dreaded. I long to see you, Sir; and, together, we will take some method of finding out where your son is. I expect to receive a letter from him every day, as he has not yet failed to impart every circumstance, that has happened at Elwood, to me, I am, with great sincerity, Sir, your grateful, and much

Obliged servant,

BASIL SOMMERTON.

LET-

LETTER XXXIX.

To CHARLES HORTON, Esq.

S I R,

AS the outrage you have dared to commit, by taking from my house a young lady whom I so truly regarded, is of the most heinous nature; there is but one method of atoning for it; that is, by restoring her to Elwood, in the same situation you took her from thence. Till you comply with this, I will never see your face: and it is extremely hard that you should force me, by the commission of such unjustifiable actions, to forbid the son, that has been the pride and happiness of my former life, to approach me. But justice and honour require it: and to you I may attribute the misery that may attend me in the remainder of my life. Once more I repeat to you, if you do not restore Harriet to me, as pure and innocent as she was when you took her away, never expect to see your injured father,

THOMAS HORTON.

VOL. II.

E

LET-

LETTER XL.

TO CHARLES HORTON, Esq;

Honoured Sir,

THIS morning, at five of the clock, my old master set out for London, to look for you, I believes; but if so be that he could not find you there, and there was any tale or tidings to be had of you before that time, then to send you this letter, which he wrote the night before he went away. I had no opportunity of sending you a letter afore; for it runs in my mind that I was watched: so, as soon as my old master was gone, I seizes the letter, and sends it to you. You bid me tell you how your father and aunt took your going off with Miss. Woundy bad indeed, Sir. Master had me into the study twice, and examined me; and also Betty, Miss's maid. I don't know what she said, but I denied every thing stiffly: he got nothing out of me. But master desired us to hold our tongues and not tell any body as how you carried Miss off, but to say, in case any body asked, that she was gone to a relation who had been suddenly taken ill. And he gave Betty and I a guinea betwixt us, to say so: and many people believe it. And if I had not gone out of the room, it was almost on my tongue's end to tell Sir Thomas all about it; but I thought

would

would not betray you, neither. My old master takes on grievously, and don't believe he has eat a hearty meal since she went away. And madam Allen is always crying: and all the servants are very sorry she is gone, for she was good to them all. This is all I have to say to you, Sir. So no more at present from

Honoured Sir, your humble servant, to command till death,

FRANCIS ADAMS.

LETTER XLI.

TO EDWARD SIMPSON, Esq.

IGNORANT whether you will read this letter through or not, yet I presume to write to you. If you can be a friend to guilt, do not reject me; for, alas! I am overwhelmed with crimes and misfortunes: yet do not spurn me. Correct me, and I will kiss the rod. Despise not penitence.

There is a rose-lip'd seraph sits on high,
 Who ever bends his holy ear to earth
 To mark the voice of penitence, to catch
 Her solemn sighs, to tune them to his harp,
 And echo them, in harmonies divine,
 Up to the throne of grace.—

May it avail me! But till you know how I have offended, you can't be a judge why I ought to be penitent. Can I attempt to relate my villainy? my hand trembles, and scarce can hold the pen. Before recollection drives me to madness, let me endeavour. 'Tis a dreadful task!

Why did not I take thy advice? why did I ever quit the path of honour and virtue? the slave of vile suspicions, which destroyed my peace of mind, I determined to prove them true, and adhere to them; or, if false, to eradicate them for ever. Fatal has been the issue of the trial.

My

My uneasiness, at the proposed match of Webster, with the now wretched Harriet, was the subject of my letter. It made me mad: and his visiting frequently to Elwood, did not serve to dissipate it. There was no possibility of coming to an explanation: for a Sir Humphry Honiton and his family, a sad set of brutes, came to pay us a visit. It was a fruitless attempt to try to speak to her alone. Miss Honiton was eternally with Harriet. At last an opportunity offered of whispering to her, which I greedily snatched, and told her, that instead of concealing, she should have acquainted me with her intended match with Webster, and have made me her friend: that I wanted much to speak to her. This she said she would contrive: and though it was apparent she had great inclination, it was impossible. Accident brought it about at last. From the number of people who were at that time visitants with us, she was obliged to change her chamber; and that which happened to be the next to mine, was allotted for her. "You may now," said I, "indulge me with that opportunity which has been so long wanting. Our chambers are contiguous; and you may permit me half an hour's conversation with the greatest safety. Your reputation cannot be endangered; for it is impossible any one should see us. You can fear nothing from me." With difficulty she consented. The night was appointed in which she was to admit me. Previous to this, I had desired an old acquaintance of mine, one Withers, a captain, to come to Elwood, and assume the name of Medlicott. I tell the whole truth, Simpson: nothing will I conceal. My intentions were evil, but they only tended to satisfy those

doubts that destroy my peace. 'Tis true also, I knew his character; knew him capable of any thing: and, if I have since suffered by my confidence in him, it was not without warning. His humour, while he was at Elwood, diverted the attention of our booby visitors from Harriet and me. At length, the evening arrived, that this lovely maid agreed, though reluctantly, to meet me. The house was at rest; and I stole into her chamber. "Thanks, ten thousand thanks, charming Harriet," said I, taking her trembling hand, and pressing it to my lips, "for this unmerited favour."

"It is more indeed, Mr. Horton, than I ought to grant; but the occasion of it is only to clear myself from a duplicity of character that ought to be avoided."

I seated myself: and, still retaining her hand in mine, placed her in the chair next me. She proceeded:

"Sir Thomas has mentioned to me, that he informed you of my having encouraged Mr. Webster's addresses, and that his father made proposals to him. Nothing ever escaped me, that could induce him to think he was more favourably received by me than any body else, except what you are already acquainted with, and which drew me before into a very embarrassing situation, and produced an *eclaircissement* equally distressing. But indeed, Mr. Horton, I cannot bear to suffer in your opinion even for a moment: and the reflection, that if you truly loved me, you would feel very sensibly the consequence of Mr. Webster's rash proceedings, made me doubly miserable."

"Dearest

"Dearest Harriet, how much am I indebted to this unexampled tenderness! Some doubts, it must be owned, seized me; and I could not help thinking, that Mr. Webster must have very special reasons for making such proposals to my father."

"It was to explain and clear up those doubts," said she, interrupting me, "I have ventured thus far; and however critical my situation may be, there can be no danger where Mr. Horton is."

"None where love resides."

I clasped her in my arms, and snatched a kiss from her. I repeated the bliss, and found her lips meet mine. My heart throbbed tumultuously, and my blood was on fire. It is impossible to repeat our conversation, which was on my side, the most rapturous professions of the sincerest passion, and vows of unalterable fidelity; and, on hers, the most innocent and virtuous acknowledgments of a tender affection, chastened by fear, and restricted by modesty. Her delicate permission of those little freedoms, however perfectly consistent with the strictest decorum, inspired me with the notion, that this was the critical moment in which I might venture to make an experiment that would satisfy my doubts. "We love each other tenderly; what then prevents our indulging the delightful passion to its greatest extent?" my words were accompanied with an embrace that alarmed her.

"What do you mean, Sir?"

"Every thing, my love, that a man who adores you, like me, can mean." And my hand, straying round her neck, attempted to remove the handkerchief from part of her lovely bosom, that I might kiss it.

"Ungenerous man," said she, starting up, though I still held her by the hand, "Is it thus you repay me for the partiality I have shewn, and the favours I have granted you? Retire, Sir, before I alarm the house, and am obliged to expose my imprudence to the world."

"Be not alarmed, too fearful Harriet: you have nothing to dread from me. To an excess of passion, attribute this innocent freedom that I ventured to take."

"Sir," said she, with a resolute tone, "the man who is capable of taking such an advantage of a woman, who unfortunately entertains too good an opinion of him, is truly despicable: and from henceforth I will look upon you in that light; and will rather submit to marry Mr. Webster, who is indifferent to me, than unite myself to a man, who could think so badly of me as you do."

"My pretty railer," said I, interrupting and kissing her, "*those lips were designed for better employment—*"

"This is not to be borne," said she, springing from my arms, and flying to the bell, which she rung with all her might. "Be assured, Sir, I will put myself under Mr. Webster's protection, to escape your insolence."

Before I could reply, her maid appeared.

"Stay here, Betty."

She obeyed.

"Sir, it is time to retire: I wish you a good night."

I stared at her with astonishment; nor could utter a syllable. At last, I intreated her to let the maid retire to the door for a moment, within hearing. With much reluctance, and many charges

charges to her to attend closely, she permitted it. I threw myself at her feet, and in the most moving language deprecated her anger. It was in vain. She interrupted me:

"Your submission is as abject, as your former behaviour was presumptuous and arrogant.

"Your politeness, Sir, I presume will no longer refuse me the liberty of going to rest."

"I go, Harriet; much loved Harriet, I go. You know not the force of a passion you can thus despise."

Betty came in, and I retreated to my own chamber. A restless night ensued. The threat to put herself under Webster's protection, stuck deep in my heart: it galled my pride, while it destroyed every hope of making her mine. What then was to be done, but to remove her from the spot where she had an opportunity of putting that menace in execution? But how? was the question. It must be done, no matter how; for I should never be able to endure her giving her hand to Webster, and be a passive witness of my own misery and disgrace. Till this moment, mightest thou have remained a peaceful and innocent sojourner at Elwood, hapless Harriet, had it not been for that preference thou gavest my hated rival! scarcely capable of forming or carrying the scheme into execution for taking her off, I applied to that villain Withers. He smoothed the road, and removed every obstruction: Stifled remorse, and banished apprehension. Himself unacquainted with the delicacy of a tender passion, by working on my fears, he rendered me deaf to the voice of honour, or the suggestions of reason, and wound me up to the commission of an action I shall repent the longest

hour of my life. I am interrupted.—A letter from the servant I left behind me at Elwood, to transmit me an account of matters there, enclosing one from my father, forbidding me ever to see him again, unless Harriet Nicolls is restored to him as pure and innocent as when I took her away—Would to heaven it were in my power! There is no torture I would not endure to be able to do it. But my hours of peace and happiness are all fled, and distraction and woe assume their place. I shall set out directly for Williams's. There your answer will find me: and from thence you may expect the conclusion of my villainous proceedings. Adieu. Oh how I am sunk—how fallen! for I dare not now, as usual, subscribe myself your friend,

CHARLES HORTON.

L E T.

L E T T E R XLII.

To Captain TOMKINS.

I BESEECH thee, dear George, to write to me by the return of the post, and acquaint me whether that infamous villain, Withers, is in London or not, or whether you know any thing of him. Fail not to answer me instantly, for every thing that is dear to me is concerned: that, base and ungenerous as he is, he has robbed of. Ill-placed confidence! But, Tomkins, he shall severely suffer for the woes he has made me feel. Though thou art an intimate and a friend of his, thou art not allied to his vices: therefore I conjure thee to find him out, if thou canst, and let me know his situation, and who is with him. At another time I will be more particular, but the chaise is waiting at the door to carry me to L—, where your answer will find me; and I must conclude myself your's,

CHARLES HORTON.

L E T-

LETTER XLIII.

TO EDWARD SIMPSON, Esq.

THE consolation of a friend, is the sweetest balm for a wounded heart: that poor Williams has afforded me. His amiable wife too has done every thing in her power. They are happy; very happy; so might I, had it not been for my own folly: but I expect not consolation from you: little do I deserve. My thoughts wander: my head is distracted: let me pursue my tale while I am able.

Withers's instigations made me resolute. I was determined to take the innocent maid from that hospitable roof where she had been so long sheltered. He went off to a neighbouring town in the morning, and laid every thing *en train*. At his return, he imparted his scheme, and how he proposed carrying it into execution. But there was one grand objection: the number of people at our house appeared an insurmountable obstacle to our getting her quietly into our possession. While we were debating on this grand point, an accident, which then appeared lucky, but which I am since convinced was just the contrary, removed all our difficulties. A messenger arrived, acquainting Sir Humphry that a very near relation, from whom he had great expectation, lay at the point of death, and desired to see him. The knight hesitated not to order his carriage instantly. While it was getting ready, he pressed Withers

to go a stage along with them: he consented. Mrs. and Miss Honiton were as pressing on Harriet, who rejected their suit for a long time, till Mrs. Allen hinted the ride would be of service to her, and that the captain would escort her back: then she consented to go. During this altercation, I appeared not at all concerned, and to that her consent was owing: for my seeming interested or desirous that she should have gone, would have most effectually prevented it. At last, out we set: for I had agreed to accompany the knight's family also. Mrs. and Miss Honiton, Harriet and young Honiton, went in the knight's coach. Withers and Sir Humphry, in our chaise. I rode, attended by Withers's servant. With exulting heart I saw the beautiful Harriet go into the coach. Yet think not worse of me than I deserve. Though my design and intentions were to take her away, and most unjustifiable they were undoubtedly, yet I never intended to deprive her of her honour. Repulsed in one attempt, which I had already made in a favourable moment, her character began to appear in a brighter light than ever. All my design was, to improve the opportunities, my having her entirely to myself, would give me, to try all the arts of soft persuasion: should she remain unaffected by them, I would have made her my wife as the reward, should she think it so of her merit and sufferings. Should she, not having constancy or perseverance enough to withstand my solicitations, seem even inclined to yield to my wishes, I would have quitted my untouched prey, and, with the utmost care and fidelity, restored her as innocent and pure as she was when

I took

I took her away. This was my romantic, my foolish scheme. Ah! never truly discovered to be so, till it was too late!—We at length arrived at the first stage; and, as we had gone pretty hard, the knight thought he should knock up his horses if he took them any further, and being necessitated to make haste, he hired post horses, and leaving his servants to take care of his own, in a short time proceeded on his journey. Our cattle wanted rest to enable them to take us home again. This was a good excuse for staying at the inn. The respectful distance we both observed to Harriet, banished her fears, and we seemed tolerable secure. The days being very short, night came on apace: and on her expressing her desire to return, the carriage was immediately ordered. Withers had previously taken care that ours was sent home. I handed the unsuspecting maid into a chaise, and we drove off like lightning. Though she could not easily see the difference, yet she perceived it was not our own chaise, by the seat being uneasy, and the glasses not alike.

“There is some mistake,” said she, “I believe, Mr. Horton. This is not Sir Thomas’s carriage.”

“Why do you think so, Miss Nicolls?”

“I have reason, Sir. These glasses, dark as it is, I can observe are not like those in his chaise: besides, other circumstances induce me to think so.”

“Can you imagine that I would deceive you, lovely Harriet, dear as you are to me?”

“Have I a right to depend upon you, since your treatment of me last night? Yet you see I am willing to do so, and have confided in your honour. I hope you will not deceive me.”

“I will

" I will not indeed, Harriet. Your suspicions are very just. You are not in my father's carriage, nor are we on our journey to Elwood."

" Good God," said she, " what will become of me ! Oh, Mr. Horton, why have you ruined me ?"

" You are not ruined, my dearest girl."

" Why have you taken me away from my friends, my only friends ? with them I am certainly ruined."

" Because you preferred an hated rival to me, and threatened to throw yourself into his arms as a protection against me. The very idea is shocking, the reality was intolerable. Were you susceptible of the passion of love, you could not blame me : but you are not ; and was capable of saying, you would sooner marry him than me, who was flattered with the hopes of being honoured with your esteem."

" Mr. Horton, you have treated me cruelly and ungenerously : but what am I to expect at your hands ? You have been open, and thrown aside disguise in one instance : do so in this."

" Every thing that the sincerest passion can dictate : you shall be treated with the greatest respect, and nothing shall be wanting to make you happy, if you are inclined to be so."

" That's impossible," said she. " Torn from my friends, and by him too whom I ought to have looked upon in that light also, can I be happy ? But they will know that I have been taken off contrary to my inclinations, and will find out some method of discovering me wherever I may be carried."

" That I foresaw, my lovely girl, and have prevented. Medicott, who follows us in ano-

" ther

“ther chaise, has your small trunk filled with
 “your gowns and linen : you see you are entire-
 “ly in my power.”

“Oh heavens!” said she, clasping her hands,
 “I am irremediably undone. And for what pur-
 “pose have you so artfully drawn me into your
 “power? Let me know the worst that can hap-
 “pen.”

“Do not be too much alarmed : for no other
 “purpose, than convincing you of my affection,
 “and how truly I love you. This is the reason
 “why Captain Medicott is to be our companion.
 “There can be no harm, where there is always a
 “witness of our behaviour. You are to pass as
 “his sister : and whenever you return to Elwood,
 “it shall be in such a manner, as shall secure you
 “a continuance of that regard and tenderness you
 “ever experienced there.”

“I know not how to believe you, Mr. Hor-
 “ton. But why cannot you return there now, as
 “well as at any other time?”

“We are a great way from thence : and since
 “I have hazarded every thing in thus getting you
 “away, do not wish to deprive me so soon of the
 “happiness of conversing with you without re-
 “straint, and sitting thus near to you : of breath-
 “ing forth my soul, and removing, if possible,
 “those doubts and scruples which you but too
 “justly entertain of me.”

By this time we came to the place where we
 were to rest that night. The manner in which
 she was treated, restored her to her security a
 little. The next morning we pursued our jour-
 ney ; and by driving very hard, reached S—
 that night. This was the place where I first in-
 tended to take her to : it was a great distance from

my

my father's; and tho' there was a prodigious resort of company there in summer time, yet in winter it was almost deserted: and, indeed, had any people been there, my father had kept so little company, that Harriet would have been unknown, and taken for what she passed—Medlicott's sister. During our journey, I persuaded her to the propriety of taking that title, and she consented to it: and though I took every opportunity of telling her how dear she was to me, and how truly I loved her, no other reply was made to me than—my future behaviour would best demonstrate that: she could not be persuaded to any such thing; and till she was again restored to those friends from whom she had been so basely taken, she could not think any protestations sincere: that more for the sake of screening her own reputation from censure, than any thing else, she would take the title of Medlicott's sister; that once more she relied upon my honour, and to consider her helpless situation in life, and how much I had to answer for, if she should be abandoned by those who had been her protectors, in consequence of my thus taking her away.—I did every thing in my power to re-assure her: and with difficulty prevailed on her, not to alarm herself so much—that no evil was intended, though there was so great an appearance of it—assured her, with much truth, that her safety was dearer to me than my own.—Her behaviour, during this day, went to my heart. When she rose in the morning, her eyes were red, and swelled with weeping; but she endeavoured to hide it from us. She would strive to check the rising sigh, and a single tear only was suffered to escape. With great entreaty would she permit me to take her hand

hand in mine. I saw her heart was distressed and afflicted, though that sorrow did not appear so visibly in her behaviour. Frequently did she desire to know when we were to return; and in the most pathetic accents, implore me not to deprive her of what was more valuable than all the rest of the world to her, the good opinion of her friends. I began to relent; my heart could not stand against such looks and such language. They penetrated to my soul. The words were on my tongue. "You have conquered, and I will return instantly."—But the consideration that my mind would soon be at ease, prevented my uttering them. "It is but a short trial, Harriet: and if a life of undeviating fondness and truth, will make you any amends for your sufferings now, that shall be your reward." This was my reflection when we entered S——

"You are now at your journey's end, Harriet. This is the place I have been telling you of."

"I know not with what design, or for what purpose, I am brought here, but fear every thing,—though I will banish suspicions, and hope the best. Mr. Horton, you are accountable for every thing that may happen to me. The world calls you a man of honour: to that I will trust. You wished and endeavoured to inspire me with a favourable opinion of you: you have succeeded but too well. Conscious of that, you have proceeded to these lengths. From thence I conjecture, that my good or bad opinion is a matter of very little moment to you. But if it is as dear as you pretend, I shall find a protector in you, and shall never have cause to repent my having thought too well of you."

I could

I could make no reply, for the chaise drove into the yard of the inn. A lodging was immediately procured in a reputable house; and Harriet took possession of the first floor; Withers and I contenting ourselves with the upper rooms. A servant was hired: and though Harriet was still ignorant of the reason of her being brought there, she was well satisfied with the treatment she met with. I had obtained a promise from her not to write to Elwood, at least for a certain time; and hinted that she was watched, and that her discovering her situation to my father would make me do some desperate deed. She did not desire to appear in public; so we lived at home mostly, and every thing wore the face of probability: uneasy and unhappy as she was at her absence from Elwood, yet she was pleased with the creditable footing on which I had placed her, and began to think herself safe: and, by what she said, had some reliance on me. We had been about five days there, and no alteration was visible in her behaviour. She appeared composed, whether she was really so or not. Frequently did she declare to me, when assuring her of the sincerity of my passion, that she would implicitly believe me when I carried her back to Elwood.

"I will then, Harriet," said I, "and soon."

"You will!" says she, and joy sparkled in her eyes.

"I will, by every thing that is sacred."

"Then I will believe you love me."

My affection and good opinion of her virtues increased every hour; and, determined to delay my happiness no longer, I only deferred it to the next day to make her acquainted with the situation

situation of my heart, and tell her the cause of my having taken her away: but that not till I had made the last attempt to satisfy my doubts. I went out that evening to the coffee-house; (Withers, lest he should be known, staying at home) and accidentally meeting an acquaintance there whom I should not have suspected to be in that part of the world, was induced to spend my evening with him, after word had been sent home that I was engaged out: at twelve I returned, and every body was retired to rest. I had indulged myself with the company in drinking a chearful glass; and when my head was laid on the pillow, soon sunk into the arms of sleep, with my imagination heated with the charms of Harriet more than the wine I had drank. In the morning, when I looked at my watch, and found it was past ten o'clock, I was surprised at not being called up before that time; and supposed that, out of compliment to me, they had waited breakfast for me below stairs. I started up; and, dressing myself, ran down, in expectation of being laughed at for lying in bed so long. I opened the dining-room door, and, to my great astonishment, beheld no preparations there for any thing like a breakfast. I rang the bell, and the woman who had been hired to wait upon Harriet, answered the summons. "Is breakfast over, Molly?"

"No, Sir: there has none been wanted to-day."

"Why so? Where's Captain Medlicott and his sister?"

"They are gone away, Sir."

"Gone! when did they go?"

"This

" This morning between one and two o'clock.
" An account they received of their mother's be-
" ing very bad and dying, made them go off in
" such a hurry. They said they would not let
" me wake you, for they would be back again
" in three or four days."

As she spoke, I found my spirits fail me; and a great chair happily received me, for I fell senseless. I was soon recovered; and the maid gave me a billet, which she said Miss Medlicott had left for me. I snatched it from her hand, and, breaking it open, looked at it for a considerable time, before I could read it: but when capable of perusing the contents, they added to my torments. It was expressed thus:

" At the moment my unsuspecting heart was
" beginning to bear testimony to your apparent
" virtues, to find myself so dreadfully deceived,
" is not to be borne. You only could be cruel
" enough, before you deprived me of my ho-
" nour, which I now have learned was your
" design, to make yourself dear to me, the
" more securely to effect your purpose. This
" treatment, Mr. Horton, I have not merited
" from you; and the less so, as my heart was
" but too susceptible of a fatal passion, and too
" much inclined for its future peace, to think
" well of you. This confession of an unhappy
" and misplaced tenderness, is the last you will
" ever receive from me. I am, at last, taught
" what I am to expect from you, if I remain
" any longer in your power. You cannot
" blame me, then, for taking an opportunity of
" returning to those friends, from whom you
" took the unfortunate

H. NICOLLS."

My

My eyes were instantly opened; and I saw to whom I was indebted for this escape: that villain Withers, taking advantage of my absence, had imposed upon her: but there was no time to be lost. Inquiry was made from what house they had their carriage, and, found: but no knowledge of the road they took. By her letter, it was reasonable to suppose they were gone to Elwood: but I was convinced Withers never intended to carry her back. "Yet he may have done so, perhaps," said I; and, ordering post-horses, immediately pursued them: but no account of them was to be had for the four first stages. Then it was, that my notion of his having seduced her away from me, and taken her to London, was confirmed. I crossed the country, and made inquiry in the London road: but no account could I get. I returned then to S——, and there wrote to you, and to an intimate of Withers's; who tells me, in answer, that he is not in town, nor does he know any thing of him. There it was I received the prohibition from my father, not to appear in his sight, till Harriet was restored. My crimes have banished me from his house; and my inability to comply with his demands, has prevented my returning. Then, what affects me still more, is, that this hapless girl, whom I have taken from under the protection of my father's friendly roof, is exposed to the insults of a man, who would make no scruple of doing any thing to gratify his passions. Distracting thought! Oh Harriet, Harriet, what recompence can I ever make thee! My iniquitous designs induced me to associate with this wretch; for the honest and virtuous man would have shunned hav-

ing

ing a part in so infamous a transaction. But his punishment shall follow mine: and if he has injured thee, unhappy Harriet, no place, however sacred, shall screen him from my vengeance. — I would give a world, if I had it, to know what is become of her. To think, with me, is to be mad: for distraction follows recollection. O Simpson, I am very wretched: as miserable as guilt, unexpiated guilt, can make me. My head burns: my heart is bursting. Oh that I had taken thy advice! My pen drops from my trembling, nerveless hand. While I am able, let me bid you farewell.

CHARLES HORTON

LET-

LETTER XLIV.

To Captain TOMKINS.

THE finest *Coup d'Essai*, George, that ever general planned, or poor unlucky soldier attempted to execute, has all gone wrong, all been spoiled with me. I am the most unfortunate dog that ever projected scheme.—*I could bite my nails for spite.* What I did, too, from the best, the honestest motives. There is no good ever attends those pious designs. In short, then,—Charles and I took off that lovely Harriet I acquainted you of in former letters; carried her clear off; got her snug at S——. Charles would have made a whore of her, as I told her, and patched up the most alarming and terrible story that ever was heard. The accounts of the bloody, cruel, inhuman, and barbarous murders, crying about London streets, are nothing to my detail.—The poor lady was so terrified, that, to escape from him, she threw herself plump into my arms, upon my promising to carry her to Elwood.—But I, knowing the old gentleman, being her relation, would give her a fortune, intended honourably, and would have made a wife of her; ran away with her, took a route across the country, for London; and, could I have contained myself longer, would have, doubtless, succeeded. But a damned rotten post-chaise left us, in the middle of our journey, in the dirt; and a farmer's house be-
ing

ing conveniently near at hand, my charmer took shelter there, till the chaise was mended, or another could be got. But when another came, the devil a foot would she go with me. She struggled: I swore. Flails, pitchforks, and the Lord knows what weapons, I encountered; and how long the combat might have continued, is impossible to tell, if a cursed horse-godmother of a servant maid had not come to the assistance of my enemies with a large pail of boiling water in her hand, and swore she would scald me as she did the hogs. I was forced to retreat; for there was no standing this: and, cursing them all with a great deal of energy, remounted my carriage, and drove off. What was to be done? To London it was very imprudent to go. The delightful family at Honiton Hall struck my fancy: and to see Miss Priscilla I went. To tell you that they were all very much rejoiced to see me, will be no news; they (the ladies) were under the greatest obligations to me for coming so kindly and in so friendly a manner, to relieve them from a disgusting solitude. The knight promised to make me drunk every day; and the young squire, to give me as much sport as I liked, either hunting or shooting: and scarcely had I rested myself after my arrival, ere I was lugged through the stables and the dog-kennels, and had nearly shared Atæon's fate, and been devoured by hounds.—You may be sure that I attributed to the desire I had to see the ladies, my early acceptance of their invitation. Mrs. Honiton thanked me in a great many fine words; but the gentle Pris told me more by one look of her eyes, than I should have learned from the aunt in twelve months.

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F

This,

This, George, is my third attempt; if this fails, I will give over scheming: but, in all human probability, this girl will be mine. The father and brother never imagine I can have any design upon her, and keep at such a respectful distance; their notions and practice of courtship consist in pulling and hawling a girl about the room, kissing and romping with her eternally. And the aunt is so well amused by the strict attention I pay her, that she does not imagine her niece has any share of my thoughts. But we have had one private meeting already; and the fair one is as susceptible of the tender passion, as is necessary: no harm in that: for I shall be blown if I stay here long, and the only way to settle the matter, is, to pop off with her. Nothing like running away with one of these country girls, if you wish to get their hearts. Here's the squire: I must have done. Let me know what news.

Yours,

THO. WITHERS.

L E T.

L E T T E R X L V.

To the Same.

ALL things go on swimmingly, George, I have fairer prospects than ever. No dark clouds shoot athwart, to obscure the view. My former disappointments have come to a very good end; and, like Voltaire's Pangloss, I shall be an optimist, and declare *whatever is, is best*. Here I am, George, with as fine expectations as any man need have of being as happy as a king. I told thee, that the gentle Priscilla had condescended to give your humble servant a private meeting. 'Twas love and rapture, gratitude, fidelity, and constancy, on my side: on hers, a proper degree of affection, mixed up with a little coyness, and less reserve. The fruit's ripe: it wants plucking: and, if I hold my mouth open, will drop into it. But last night;—night, you know George, is my favourite season—last night I got the damsel alone. I don't know, for my part, how it happened; but so it was.

Hot with the *Gallic* grape, and high in blood:

For Sir Humphry and I had been taking a bumper of burgundy to a favourite toast of his, and being as eloquent as an angel, succeeded more with my pretty rustic in half an hour, than

F 2

I should,

I should, perfectly sober, in half a year. I dropped on my knees :

I kneel to conquer, and but stoop to rise :

And confessed, that I had imposed upon her.

“ Oh! how so, captain?”

“ By assuming a name, madam, that does not belong to me: but it was Mr. Horton’s desire I should do it, in order to assist him the better in his base designs against Miss Nicolls. In going to Elwood to see him, little imagining what his meaning was, at his request, I took the name of Medlicott, instead of Withers. This imposture I could no longer reconcile to my honour, or the sincerity of my passion for you. The moment I learned Mr. Horton’s intentions, they appeared so shocking, that taking French leave of him, to avoid coming to any disagreeable altercation with a man whom I once esteemed, and whom it was impossible to wean from his follies, I quitted him with the determination of paying my *devoirs* at Honiton hall, where they are more particularly due.”

This was not badly received; and satisfying Pris in a thousand questions about Miss Nicolls, and giving her the preference to all her sex in a lump, I ascended from her hand to the lips in a regular progression of kisses; and at last received a confession, that she loved me. On my knees again, to thank her. At last agreed to marry me, when ever an opportunity offered. That should not long be wanting. I played my part to a miracle—so tender—so soft—

Wou'd

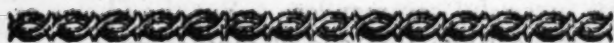
Would you gain the tender creature?
Softly, gently, kindly treat her.

Wine, dear wine, did it all. Divine Burgundy! how much am I indebted to thee? so now, George, I may as safely sing *Te Deum* as any other successful commander. But the sinews of war are wanting: that cursed journey from S—, with that good-for-nothing vixen, drained my pockets consumedly. Have you a spare thirty or forty pound note to send me? never more wanted, by the body of Cæsar. When I take possession of the land flowing with milk and honey, you shall make as many demands on me as you please.

A letter! and from thee!—What do you mean, Tomkins?—Instead of congratulations on my success, you are abusing me for my treatment of Horton. Why, I have behaved a little like a rascal, to tell the truth of it: but, for the soul of me, could not help it;—nor could you in my place. One of the loveliest women in the creation, with streaming eyes imploring your protection from a bugbear yourself had raised, and willing to go with you wheresoever you would take her—who could refuse her? my heart was not so hard to do any such thing. And as for Horton's threatened vengeance, that must be staved off till I am married; and then he, for the sake of my wife, will forgive me, especially as no harm was done. The rest of your very grave and edifying epistle, and the advice about Maria, I shall take no notice of: but if you can raise the wind for me upon this occasion, George, it will be of most singular service. It

is a great pity to lose a sheep for an halfpenny worth of tar. The next week at farthest I shall be able to introduce you to the wife of

THOMAS WITHERS.



LETTER XLVI.

To Mrs. ALLEN.

WHEN I sit down to address you, my dearest Madam, my heart misgives me, and tells me that you will not read any letter that comes from me. But, indeed, my character has been wronged, and my reputation has suffered very unjustly. Many arts and contrivances have been used, such as taking away my cloaths without my knowledge, to make it appear as if I went away willingly: but, I assure you, Madam, I have not known one happy moment since I saw you; nor shall again, till I am informed whether you and Sir Thomas, my generous benefactor, will receive me again into favour and protection. You are my only friends; nor can I apply to any body else: and had not my innocence and honour been unimpeached, I would not have made this application. When I have the pleasure of seeing you, if you will permit such a favour, for though I may not be blameless,

less, yet I am not guilty; you shall be acquainted with every circumstance of this transaction which has cost me so many tears, and, I fear, ruined me in your good opinion. But give me an opportunity of clearing my innocence, madam, and then let me die; for I desire to live no longer, when I shall lose your esteem. I have been very ill, in consequence of the fatigue I have undergone. Dear Mrs. Allen, you used to call me your child: take a mother's part, and shew me compassion; for I am not less worthy now than before, though I am the unhappy and injured

HARRIET NICOLLS.

P. S. Your answer will find me at Mr. Layton's, a farmer at—

LETTER XLVII.

To Miss WEBSTER.

AH, Lucy! since I wrote last to you what trouble have I undergone.—But perhaps you won't receive my letters, nor hold correspondence with one, whose character is by this time the sport of clowns, and the triumph of the malicious. Yet, Lucy, I will think better of you, than to imagine you would desert your friend, whose honour, however, thank heaven, is as unspotted and pure, as the first day you knew her.—But tell me if my correspondence will be prejudicial to you, or if it is prohibited, in that case I will abstain from writing. But it will be a difficulty for me to keep those things to myself, which I have been, for so long a time, continually accustomed to communicate to you. I will begin, then, where my last letter left off. It told you how uneasy Mr. Horton was, and desirous to speak to me, and how improbable it was at that time that we should get an opportunity, as Sir Humphry Honiton's family was at Elwood.. But as we were very much crouded, I was obliged to quit my room, and went into the green chamber next to Mr. Horton's; who soon was acquainted with that disposition, and again pressed me to speak to him alone, and asked permission to see me in my room. It was wrong to grant it: but so unhappy was I, that nothing was wrong that could give me ease. I am
ashamed

ashamed to tell you, Lucy, that he deceived my hopes and expectations; and treated me in such a manner, as too plainly evinced his base intentions. I rung for assistance, and Betty came down, and he was obliged to leave me: but it seems, in the heat of my anger I had threatened to marry your brother, that I might be protected from his insults. This was the cause of his taking me away the next day, as I suppose you have heard long enough ago. To put a better face on the matter, captain Medlicott, whom I mentioned to you before, was to be our companion. It is needless to tell you my grief and terror, at finding myself seduced away from my friends; but Mr. Horton endeavoured to calm me; and I will do him the justice to say, that he treated me, in every other respect, with the greatest tenderness and delicacy. In the evening of the second day we arrived at S——, where a very genteel lodging was taken, and servants hired for me: and in all this time I perceived nothing that could alarm me, though I was extremely vigilant, in Mr. Horton's behaviour. You must know I was transformed into captain Medlicott's sister, in order the better to avoid suspicion, and to carry a probability of truth. We had been here five days: and Horton's tenderness and respect seemed to increase instead of diminish, when he had me in his power: and on my frequently requesting him to take me home, he, at last, swore to me he would, and very soon. I had reason to doubt, yet was inclined to believe him. Going to the coffee-house that evening, he was engaged by an acquaintance whom he accidentally met there, and with whom he was obliged to sup; as he sent word to me not to

wait for him. Captain Medlicott chose to stay at home. As I had been relieved from disagreeable reflections frequently by the captain's mirth and gaiety, it surprised me not a little to find him this evening extremely melancholy and dull.

"What is the cause of your being so low spirited, captain?"

"I have no cause that affects myself Miss, it is for you that I am concerned."

"For me! Dear Sir, for what? I beseech you explain yourself."

"Ah, Miss Nicolls, I am very sorry I have had a hand in this affair: but my friend must not be betrayed, or—"

"Oh, Sir, proceed. You alarm me. He can't be betrayed by your telling me."

"Ah," said he, with a look full of pity, and shaking his head, "unfortunate young lady!—You know not why you were brought here, and, till lately, I knew it not myself; or if I had, nothing should have induced me to be a witness to his—"

"You terrify me to death, Captain Medlicott. For heaven's sake, let me know what you mean."

He raised my terror still higher by broken sentences, and obscure hints, before he told me the dreadful tale; which was, that, Mr. Horton had only restrained himself, since we had left Elwood, by his persuasion and advice, or he would have taken that by force which I refused to grant him; and added, that he intended the next night to carry me off, where no other person should be able to find me; and, as a proof of his sincerity and honesty, he told me, that, for the purpose of deceiving me, Horton had made

made him change his name from Withers to Medlicott; and pulled out several letters from his pockets to convince me. I was petrified, and knew not what to say or do. A flood of tears relieved me. "What will become of me? what shall I do?" said I, in an agony of fear and despair. "Oh! that I knew how to escape from the hands of this barbarous man."

"That's almost impossible," said Withers, "but it might be done."

"Oh! tell me how: there is nothing that I will not venture to get rid of him!"

"My heart bleeds for you, Miss Nicolls; and I cannot sit still, and see you the victim of brutal passion. I have been instrumental in bringing you here, and will risque every thing to take you away again from hence. But perhaps you would not trust yourself under my care."

I promised to be directed by him: and he declared he would leave me safe at Elwood. He magnified the service he intended to render me, especially as it would be the cause of his losing his friend, and perhaps his life would be endangered from his resentment: I offered to go alone, if he would permit me, and only put me in a way. No: there was nothing to be put in competition with honour and virtue: in that cause he would willingly shed his blood, were it necessary. We therefore planned our escape, and fixed upon setting out between one and two that morning. He went out to hire a carriage; and I retired to my chamber, to write a note to Mr. Horton. Every thing was settled: and when he returned about twelve o'clock, being informed
the

the Captain and I were in bed, went up stairs, without asking any more questions. At half after one the chaise was ready, and away we went. My paper is out, and I am not suffered to write much, as I am not yet perfectly recovered. You shall hear soon from,

Yours,

HARRIET NICOLLS.

LET-

L E T T E R XLVIII.

To Sir THOMAS HORTON, Bart.

THANK God, thank God, brother; I am able to send you joyful news: read the enclosed letter from our dear Harriet. I have but just this moment received it, and have ordered Tom to get ready to go to London with it directly, for I would not wait for the post. When this letter was brought to me, as I knew the hand, I was afraid to look in it for a long while: at last I did open it, and shed many a tear at the perusal of it. And now you see, brother, that our Charles is not so bad as you thought. I knew he would not be so wicked. And poor Mr. Atkinson, who comes to see me every day, thought so too. The worthy old gentleman, who is here now, was as glad as I was to hear from her: But we both agreed, there must be some mystery in the cloaths being taken away without her knowledge, and that Betty might have some hand in that; so we sent for her, and desired her to bring down all her young Mistress's gowns, and there were three missing. So I asked where they were: and she said, that Miss had taken them with her. So then I read that part of the dear child's letter; and she still said, she knew nothing of them. But Mr. Atkinson took her to task, and told her what a crying sin it was to be obstinate in a lie; and that she would be accountable for all the evil that might happen;
and

and talked to her till she fell a crying, and went down upon her knees, and confessed to us, after begging pardon, that Mr. Horton had given her two guineas, and desired her to put some gowns and linen into Miss Harriet's little trunk, for that they were going a jaunt where they did not choose to let any body know; and not to say a word: and that was all she did. So I imagined the poor girl might have been deceived; and after we had reprimanded her, ordered her up stairs again. I could not send you this, without acquainting you of that particular. Thomas is waiting: so I must conclude, with desiring you to present my best respects to Sir Basil Sommer-ton, and tell him, that I wish him joy on the recovery of his daughter, and so does Mr. Atkin-son, who presents his compliments to you. But if you propose going down to her, as I imagine you do, would not have you surprise her too much, as the dear child has been sick. You should prepare her for a sight of you, which she seems to dread very much. Let me know how she receives you, and in what situation you find her. Accept the love of your affectionate sister,

REBECCA ALLEN.

LET.

LETTER XLIX.

To Miss WEBSTER.

MY last concluded with the account of my happiness in getting away from Mr. Horton, along with Withers. I thought myself so, Lucy; but was mistaken. We reached the post-chaise, which waited for us at some distance from our house, and drove off as fast as we could. My companion still exaggerated the services he performed, and heightened his own merit. I was all gratitude and acknowledgment. This occupied the first stage. The second, I found him still harping on the same string, and hinting at receiving a reward for the benefits he had procured me. When I understood him, he said, that "the least I could do for him, was to bestow my hand upon him, as he had preserved me from violation." This demand was rather extraordinary: however, I suppressed my resentment, and desired him to postpone his request till we arrived at Elwood. "That would be a great while first," he said; "for we were going a contrary way."

"How could you break your promise with me, Captain?"

"What sanctifies the breach of all promises, charming Harriet—love, almighty love! And since I have got you in my power, you shall now be mine: I intend to treat you honourably, and make you my wife."

"My

“ My consent is requisite, I apprehend.”

“ But you will be too prudent to refuse it, after what has happened: and you should look on me as your best friend, for offering such a thing, to stop those breaches which this affair will make in your character.”

I was much enraged with him, and my indignation supported my spirits. I treated him with the greatest contempt.

“ You are wrong, young lady,” said he: “ this behaviour will make me pursue methods I would not willingly have done. But you should not arrogate so much dignity, for you have been my dupe in this whole affair, and the story I told you at S——, for the purpose of getting you away, was an entire fiction; and you, who ought to have known Charles Horton better, were simple enough to believe it. I have you now in my power, and will take care you do not escape me, as you did him.”

“ It is true enough,” replied I, with an heart-felt sigh; “ you have me in your power indeed. But yet treat me generously.”

“ I thought I should bring you to terms,” said he: “ yes, if you will consent to be mine; I will deal generously by you:—upon no other conditions.”

We heard a great crack just at this time, and presently after found the chaise sink. We called out to the post-boy, who, fortunately, for us, immediately stopped, or we should have been all in the dirt; for the wheel, or the axle-tree, or some material part was broken. To save ourselves from being overturned, we got out; and though it rained very hard, were glad to escape a danger,

a danger, the consequence of which might have been very fatal. Where should we go? Providentially a comfortable farm house appeared at a small distance, and thither we determined to go. The carriage was obliged to be left where we quitted it: and the driver, taking the horses with him, rode on to bespeak another chaise for us. By crossing two fields, we got to Mr. Layton's house, who received us with a cordiality that bespoke our welcome. The farmer made an increase to the fire in the kitchen. His wife and her sister, taking me into the parlour, provided a very sufficient fire, not only to dry, but to roast me. When I got by myself, as I may call it, when with my own sex, my resentment subsided; and my heart, which was full charged, relieved itself, very fortunately for me, in tears. Mrs. Layton and her sister were astonished at seeing me so distressed. Their friendly inquiries, and offers of service, though it proved their intentions to serve me, were of no effect: and till I had cried plentifully, could not answer them; and the first exclamation I made was, "Oh! Horton, Horton, into what trouble hast thou brought me!"

"Pray, madam," said Sally Cooper, for that was the sister's name, "is that a son of Sir Thomas Horton's?"

"It is: do you know him?"

"Perfectly well; and shall always revere and esteem him as the guardian and preserver of my honour, when I could not take care of it myself."

This astonished me: so different this character from every other that I had heard of him, or my experience of his practice. However, Sally

ly cleared up the matter, by telling me, in general terms, her reasons for speaking so well of Mr. Horton; and his forbearance and generosity redounded very much to his honour. You shall hear the whole when I have the pleasure of seeing you, for the narration is too long to come within the compass of this letter. By this time the chaise was arrived, and word was sent in to me of it, and a desire to know, if I was ready. My thoughts had been employed more on Sally's story, than my situation; and were recalled only by the message that was delivered to me. Turning to Sally and Mrs. Layton, I told them, "that this Captain Withers had seduced me
" from my friends; and as I had providentially
" fallen into their hands, that if they would only
" keep me with them till I should be able to
" hear from Sir Thomas Horton, that they
" should be well rewarded for their trouble: and
" concluded with conjuring them to protect me." They promised me faithfully they would: and Mrs. Layton, going out to speak to her husband about me, gave me the opportunity of telling Sally, that it was from Mr. Horton he had taken me, and was going to carry me to London. She comforted, and reassured me, that nothing should take me away from thence. Mrs. Layton coming in told me, that she had engaged her husband in my behalf; and informed Sally, that a Mr. Cooke, who I since understand is an admirer of her's, was just come in. As she went out to speak to him to take my part, I heard Withers's voice very loud. Not able to endure the thought that my friends should be exposed to his insults for my sake, and not face him myself, mustering up all my courage, I went, with trembling

bling steps, into the kitchen, where he was raving and swearing he would have me away with him. It is impossible, my dear Lucy, to describe this scene of confusion to you: every body talking at once. With a great deal of difficulty he was obliged to relinquish me, and I saw him get into his chaise with heart-felt satisfaction—Mr. Layton's family rejoiced very much at my escape from him; and Mr. Cooke offered his services to me in the most friendly manner. I began to find myself in security, for the first time since I had left Elwood; and though my resentment and fear prevented my being affected with that extraordinary fatigue I had undergone, and the anxiety I had been in; yet, when in safety, my spirits relaxed all at once, and the symptoms of a fever came on me very fast. Some judicious applications of Mrs. Layton, and the care of Sally, soon restored me; and in a week's time, I was able to write to Mrs. Allen; and all my hopes and wishes are, that she may believe me innocent, and may restore me to that place which I formerly possessed in both her's and Sir Thomas's esteem. Nor would I lose thy good opinion, my dear friend: it would make me miserable. Surely you will have more compassion than the ill-natured and misjudging world, which is ever ready to condemn a woman from appearances, no matter whether guilty or not. Let me hear from you though, as I shall construe your silence to be a proof that you believe every thing that will be said against me. Oh how I long to receive a letter from Mrs. Allen! Let me conjure you to write to thy friend,

HARRIET NICOLLS.

L E T-

LETTER L.

TO EDWARD SIMPSON, Esq.

THOUGH I have not received an answer to my letters, yet, my friend,—will you permit me to call you so?—I cannot help writing to you. Pleasure is unknown to me, and peace deserts me. How dreadful is self-conviction! But were my sufferings ten times more than they are, I merit them all: and could they either restore the unfortunate Harriet to her friends at Elwood, or to me, I would bear them with pleasure. That is not to be done: and Withers has ruined us both. My brain has been so distracted, that I have not acknowledged the receipt of that packet containing your history. It was delivered to me just before I left Elwood; and not having time to peruse it then, have since read it with attention. How do we differ, thou worthy man! you suffer from the villainy of the world; from such fellows as I, who think every woman lawful prey: I, most deservedly, from that compunction and sorrow arising from a knowledge and confession of guilt; yet my heart is deeply interested in your behalf, and, though torn by a thousand griefs, nevertheless feels for you.

To each his suff'rings. All are men
 Condemn'd, alike, to groan:
 The tender, for another's pain;
 Th' unfeeling, for his own.

When

When my mind is a little at ease, and has acquired some rest from a certainty of what is become of poor Harriet, permit me to go to France, and make an inquiry concerning your wife and daughter, perhaps success may attend my endeavours to find them out, and I may be instrumental in making the latter part of your life more happy than the beginning has been. What miseries and misfortunes do the crimes of the unworthiest part of mankind induce upon the most deserving! You had not been lost to happiness, but for the villainous designs of abandoned men against your wife. I am beginning to turn convert, and abhor the opinions I so fondly and foolishly entertained. This letter must be finished by-and-by. A mist is gathered over my sight; my head aches. Good bye.

LET-

LETTER LI.

To the Same.

SIR,

MR. Horton desired me to send you the enclosed, which he intended to have finished; but being seized with a fever on his spirits, was utterly incapable. His disorder increased very fast, and he was obliged to be confined to his bed. For three days he was delirious; and as I knew his illness chiefly arose from a disturbed mind, he was kept as quiet as possible, and treated in the most lenient manner. In his fits he talked much of you; and of Withers, whom he always execrated, and threatened; but he always spoke of his poor Harriet with the utmost pity and tenderness. Yesterday, which was the fifth day, he cooled, and his fever is beginning to leave him. In a short time I hope to give you an account of his being perfectly restored to his health, but thought it unnecessary to alarm Sir Thomas, as there is now no danger. I am, with true respect, Sir,

Your obliged and humble servant,

H. WILLIAMS.

LET-

LETTER LII.

To Captain TOMKINS.

I AM on the rack of expectation, Tomkins; why do you not write to me? This delay of yours will most infallibly ruin my project. What the devil can I do, with scarce two guineas in my pocket? You are no usurer, or I could promise to restore the money again to you fourfold. The time is nearly elapsed in which the gentle Pris is to become my wife, and there is not cash enough to take her off. This is Thursday, and Tuesday morning is the appointed hour. She is preparing, in the most secret manner, for her escape. The very thoughts of running away from and deceiving her father and aunt, are sufficient charms for her, exclusive of having any thing to say to me. We have had several interviews, tender and interesting, in which I have promised every thing she could require: but the fulfilling of these promises depends entirely upon you; for, if the ready is not to be had, I shall be blown up. Never was any affair of this kind so little suspected by the parties concerned. It was but yesterday the knight was advising with me how to dispose of his daughter. A neighbouring gentleman of a pretty fortune it seems has proposed to her father, and my advice to be sure was necessary on the occasion. The old gentleman seemed to favour the match himself; and you may depend upon it,

it, that I did not contradict him. My approbation finished the matter; and a favourable message was sent to the lover, permitting him to pay his addressee to the lady whenever he pleased. I failed not to take advantage of this, when I had the daughter by herself. "It was your fortune he courted," said I, "not yourself. His claim, sanctified by a parent's authority, must have weight; and you will be made a sacrifice to the most interested views." This had a proper effect, and we swore an inviolable fidelity to each other. To prove the truth of her passion, she proposed going off with me the next day: but powerful reasons forbade that. I am now obliged to fly the lady, lest she should be too warm. This is rather cruel, as all my hopes depend upon that warmth being properly fed with the soft fuel of love. However, let what will happen now, I am sure of her another time: yet—a bird in hand.—If it were possible, I should choose to enjoy the present, and trust not to the future. Consider what has been said, and delay not to assist thy poor

T. WITHERS.

L E T.

LETTER LIII.

To Doctor WILLIAMS.

SIR,

YOUR letter, giving me an account of Mr. Horton's illness, occasioned me much concern: but as there was then a prospect of recovery, and being under your care, I have no doubt he is by this time in a fair way of doing well. Mr. Horton has been my friend, Sir. His friendship I sought; and, for a time, have enjoyed it. I thought I saw through his wildness and fondness for gallantry, a good principle, and an honest heart: the event has proved, that I was deceived. Does it therefore follow, that he must still be my friend? I think not. When he deserts and forsakes those good qualities which first made me esteem him, I can no longer love the man. To come closer to the point. Mr. Horton, has, in the course of a life of gallantry, imbibed principles of the worst and most destructive nature: has adopted notions that tend to destroy the bands of society, and render mankind miserable. My advice and example were not wanting to dissuade him from the practice of those tenets. In vain! In the person of Harriet Nicolls, he injured the daughter of Sir Basil Sommerton; whose family is more ancient and noble than his own. Yet, what humanity dictated

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tated

tated to advise him to abstain from, as a friend then; I must resent and feel, as a father, now. This is the cause why I have not written to him: yet am willing to give him the satisfaction of knowing the reason. My child is now under my protection, and secured from his insults, or those of his debauched companions. From hence, he should learn to do, as he would be done by, were he a father. With sincere wishes for your happiness, I remain

Your humble servant,

BASIL SOMMERTON.

L E T.

LETTER LIV.

To Miss WEBSTER.

IT is too much, Lucy, my dear Lucy. This extraordinary turn in my favour, is more than I can bear. Happiness and prosperity have almost overwhelmed me. My heart, accustomed to tranquil pleasures, is almost suffocated by this unexpected revolution. I must therefore make you acquainted with it, as well to afford you the satisfaction of knowing I have found both a father and fortune, as to give myself ease. My last letter described, in part, the uneasiness I suffered, lest Mrs. Allen should not answer my letter, or you should not have thought as well of me as I deserved. Day after day did I send to the post-house, and no letter came. My spirits began to fail, my hopes to desert me: the night was passed in tears, the day in lamentations: my situation was most deplorable. Without a friend to go to. "How much hast thou to answer for, ungrateful, ungenerous Horton!" said I to myself: "thou, for whom my heart first felt a tender sensation, and who first taught it to love:" for, Lucy, at this moment, I must confess, I cannot hate him as I ought. Three days passed in this dreadful uncertainty; and on the fourth, after dispatching the man to inquire for letters, from my chamber, where I was indulging my sorrows, I saw a post-chaise with three servants stop before Mr. Layton's gate, and the

door being opened, Sir Thomas Horton came out, followed by another elderly gentleman, whom I could not help looking on with a great deal of pleasure. My confusion was so great at seeing him, though it was what I most wished for in the world, that I had not power to go down to meet him; but throwing myself on the bed, burst into a flood of tears. Poor Sally ran up stairs, as fast as ever she could, and, with joy in her countenance, told me, that my friend Sir Thomas Horton was below, and impatient to see me. I looked at her, but could not speak, my heart was so full. At last, she brought me a little to myself, and I went down with her. The sight of my worthy benefactor renewed my shame; and endeavouring to throw myself on my knees at his feet, he prevented it, and embraced me in the tenderest manner. "It is I, who should kneel to you, my dearest child," said he, "and ask your forgiveness, who have suffered so much by an unworthy son of mine." "I forget it, Sir, on being restored to your good opinion, and esteemed by you as I have been." "You are indeed, Harriet: but I must now surrender you up to one who has a greater interest in you. Though bred up as my relation, you were not at all of kin to me. Your father was then unknown to me: he is since found." "Oh, Sir! where is he, that I may fly, and pay my duty to him." "He is here, my beloved Juliet," said the other gentleman, advancing, and clasping me to his bosom. My heart, affected with unusual pleasure, gave assent to what he told me. But this

this meeting I cannot describe: it was all joy, all rapture and happiness. Mr. Layton's family took part in our pleasure: and my father, since I can now call him so, thanked them for their care of me. At this period I received your kind note, for it is not to be called a letter, Lucy; and had the great comfort to find, that this affair has been kept so secret, and that my character has not suffered as I expected it would: neither have I been lost to thy friendship. While we were taking a dish of tea, the Mr. Cooke, whom I have mentioned before as Sally Cooper's admirer, came in. As he had been also my friend when Captain Withers would have forced me away, I acquainted my father with the obligations I was under to him. After thanking him very politely, he inquired if his father was alive, and what he was, and whom he then lived with. The other answered all these questions with much good nature. At last, being asked if he remembered Lieutenant Sommerton? he started from his chair. "I do," said he, "though I was but a mere boy when he left me. I remember him very well: and though yours is not entirely his face, the voice is the same, and you must be him."

"I am that Sommerton," said he; and they flew to each other's arms.

"Where's my sister?"

"She is dead," said my father, with a sigh; "but there's her daughter," pointing to me.

I rose to acknowledge my uncle; and he was overjoyed at finding me related to him.

“ That face was well known to me ; for you
“ are as like your mother as can be, my dear
“ niece—but I could not immediately recol-
“ lect it.”

They then came to an explanation of their situations : and my father acquainted him, that by his father's and brother's deaths, who it seems had treated him very ill, he had got a title, and a large estate. He invited Mr. Cooke to go to London along with him, which he declined, as his uncle, with whom he then lived, and who had behaved very kindly to him, was ill ; but promised to come as soon as possible. After thanking Mr. Layton's family for their kindness to me, we prepared to set off. I had just an opportunity of telling Sally Cooper before we parted, that “ I expected, in a short time, to
“ call her aunt.” She replied, that “ as Mr.
“ Horton's affections were fixed on me, she never hoped to recall them ; and that if Mr.
“ Cooke retained his good opinion of her, she
“ should listen more seriously than ever to his addresses.” With very sincere assurances of my friendship for her, and many thanks for the services she had rendered me, we parted. Our journey to London was attended with nothing remarkable, except my father's informing me of the particulars of his life, and how I came into Sir Thomas Horton's family. They are much too long to be communicated by letter, but will serve to wear away a winter's evening hereafter. Nothing can equal my father's fondness and affection for me. He will spoil me. An elegant house ; and servants all at my command. Every thing I do meets his approbation, though I am afraid I do not always merit it. It seems he only
took

took up his title when he had discovered me to be his daughter; and the door of Sir Basil Sommerton is continually open to visitors. Among the others who have been to congratulate us, Lord L——, my father's uncle, came, and treated me with a distinction and kindness which were very flattering. I am to be introduced into the politest circles. In short, there is no knowing what is to be done for me. This will turn my little head. Do not you think so, my dear Lucy? rather, do not you imagine it is turned already? but, think not so badly of me. My thoughts return very frequently to the solitudes of Elwood, to the dependent situation I esteemed myself in there: but I have a little opportunity of shewing my gratitude to Sir Thomas, who lives with my father. They are both my fathers, and my attention is divided between them; nor is my real father displeased at the distinction I treat Sir Thomas with. My thoughts run upon affairs too, which are not to be forgotten: cannot you guess what they are? I am interrupted, and must lay down my pen. It is amazing how I could get time to write so much. You shall hear again very soon from thy affectionate,

JULIET SOMMERTON.

LETTER LV.

To the SAME.

WEALTH cannot yield perfect happiness : I am beginning to experience it, Lucy. An account has been received from a gentleman's house, where Mr. Horton went to after I had left him at S——, that he has been dangerously ill, but is now out of danger, and there are great hopes, and every prospect of his recovery. However Sir Thomas might have been offended with his son, for his treatment of me, yet he is excessively grieved at this news ; and his parental tenderness excludes his resentment. My father is concerned ; and I believe really esteems him, though he does not say so : and in compliment to Sir Thomas, this adventure is not spoken of before him. But you will naturally ask me, what I feel on this occasion ? Indeed my heart is interested ; perhaps more than it should be. Though this action, I mean his taking me from Elwood, should not be justified by the consequences that have ensued from it ; yet, as he is the author of my happiness in one shape, I cannot help thinking gratefully of him. But in searching into the bottom of my heart, another cause besides gratitude remains. Should I not detest him, Lucy ? abhor him ? but I cannot, and am ashamed to say so : yet it is truth. My heart bleeds for him, and sympathizes in his trouble. The physician, from whom this account came,

came, for I have the story but very imperfectly, says, in his letter, that his illness is owing to a disturbed mind. Perhaps he repents his treatment of me. Indeed I heartily forgive him. Perhaps that would assist his recovery, were he acquainted with it : but there is no possibility of doing that, neither would it be prudent. However uneasy I may be to hear of his doing well, I must wait with patience till another account can be received from him. Lucy, you must obtain leave from your father to come and see me. Your presence and advice will be both pleasing and serviceable. We shall be able to chat of these matters in a more ample manner than we can communicate them by letters. It seems that I am to be introduced at St. James's next week. I shall go there with an aching heart : but the knowledge of Mr. Horton's recovery would cure it. Such a number of visitors, and such a multitude of acquaintances : there is no such thing as telling you one half of them. But were they put all together, Lucy, your friendship outweighs them. You shall have a description of the ceremony I go through. How shall a bashful, awkward, country girl, bear the appearance of majesty ? I tremble at the figure I shall cut, exhibiting myself before so many nobles and people of fashion, as they say there are always at court. However, it is my father's desire, and I must submit with pleasure. Sir Thomas intends to write to your father, for leave for you to come and spend some time with your affectionate,

JULIET SOMMERTON.

LETTER LVI.

To Doctor WILLIAMS.

WILLIAMS, you have restored me to health—to life: I thank you. But you cannot restore me to hope; that is fled, and life is a burthen: then I retract my thanks. Wretched is my existence, deprived of that sweet comforter. It was contrary to your advice I left your house. You told me truly I was unable to bear the fatigue of the journey. Experience convinced me that you were right, for I was very ill on the road; but nothing should keep me from the sight of my dear Harriet. Yet it seems her name is Juliet now. Frank, the faithful Frank, met me according to my desire. How much was the poor fellow shocked to see me look so ill! The disorders of the mind have a great effect in changing the looks and appearance of the face and body. I sent him to inquire after Sir Basil Sommerton. He is a clever, smart, intelligent fellow, and brought me every account I could wish. He picked up one of their servants at an alehouse, and learned from him how matters stood. The family is a very good one: and the present Sir Basil has an ample fortune. Nothing can exceed the joy that is expressed on this amiable daughter's being recovered so very unexpectedly. She is adored by every body, and the toast of all the smart fellows about town.—My father too lives in the house, and is as much
master

master there as Sir Basil. They went both together somewhere or other, and brought her home with them; and I am totally excluded. But where they found her, or how she escaped Withers, is yet a mystery to me. That scoundrel! at his name my languid blood throbs in my veins, and my enfeebled body acquires fresh vigour from the desire of vengeance. His breach of friendship, of honour, is nothing, in consideration of the injuries he has done the beloved of my soul. Think not that my heart, like a child, longs only for that which it is not possible to obtain, or that my passion is heightened by opposition. I loved her, and truly: and, when I might have made her mine,

Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
Richer than half his tribe.

She once, I have strong reason to believe it, loved me also: but I have deceived her hopes, and disappointed her expectations: and her love is and ought to be turned into hatred. Oh, Williams, what have I lost! My nerves are yet too weak to write a long letter. You shall hear soon how my father receives me, for I am determined to send to him. Give my best wishes to my good friend your better half.

Adieu.

CHARLES HORTON.

L E T-

LETTER LVII.

To the SAME.

PERHAPS breathing the same air with the injured Harriet—I can call her by no other, but that long-loved name—may have been of service, and helped to restore me. Perhaps the sight of her may have contributed to my recovery: for I have seen that adorable girl, Williams. But let me proceed regularly. I sent a note to my father: it was conceived thus:

“ Though my faults have so justly provoked
 “ the most indulgent of fathers to forbid me his
 “ sight, unless I complied with a condition im-
 “ possible to be performed; yet, as the lady,
 “ whom I have so much injured, is restored to
 “ her parents, and is in a fair way to be happy,
 “ let me not, who am truly wretched in having
 “ by my own folly lost the woman I loved, and
 “ a sincere friend, have the additional misery of
 “ being deprived of a father. My duty would
 “ have impelled me to throw myself at your
 “ feet, have acknowledged my crime, and en-
 “ treated your forgiveness: but it is totally im-
 “ possible, and improper in your present situa-
 “ tion. Will you then, Sir, do me the favour
 “ of appointing a place where I may meet you?
 “ or will you call upon me, that I may once
 “ more

"more prove myself your dutiful and affectionate,

CHARLES HORTON."

This had the desired effect. He sent word to me, that he would be with me at such an hour, and came accordingly. I rose to meet him: but so great was the force of conscious guilt, that I could not meet his eyes. I attempted to humiliate myself before him; but was prevented. He took me in his arms, and forced me to a seat. I had then courage to look at him: and he appeared much shocked at the figure I cut, for I am still a little pale and emaciated.

"Sir, can you pardon me?"

"I am sorry, Charles, you ever had cause to ask it from me: but to one so sensible of the necessity of it, 'tis not to be refused. I am sure I shall pardon you more easily, than you will forgive yourself. From henceforth, let there be no more said about it. It grieves me to see you so much altered: but you must take care of yourself, and strive to get well again."

"Your goodness overwhelms me. I don't deserve your lenity. But though I have not offended you beyond the reach of forgiveness, yet Sir Basil, and his lovely daughter, will never pardon me."

"He was doubtful," he said, "and could give me no hopes." And then gave me the account of his getting her first, and why he passed her for a distant relation: and added, "that it was his intention and desire that she should be my wife, if she was agreeable to me; as he

“ he was sensible, the sweetness of her disposition, and her other virtues, would have made me truly happy.” Oh, Williams, what were my sentiments at that moment! how I cursed myself and my foolish notions! My father stayed and dined with me, and told me he would come and see me frequently, but would not tell Sir Basil or his daughter that I was in town. Among other things, he mentioned that Miss Sommerton was to be introduced to their Majesties on the Wednesday following. I determined to be present, though I did not acquaint him with my intentions. The account he gave me of his first meeting with her is too long for a letter, but you shall know it, when I have the pleasure of seeing you. My father came constantly to see me: and though he hinted that he intended being present when she was introduced, yet that did not deter me. I mixed in the circle without being perceived, and saw the lovely Juliet in all the blaze of beauty. The natural elegance and delicacy of her features, were heightened by her timidity at appearing in such a polite and numerous assembly. But there was an inexpressible grace and dignity in her manner, that charmed every body. I could not avoid reflecting, when the lovely maid was presented to our truly amiable queen, how it came to pass, that the morals of this nation should be so extremely relaxed, and luxury and libertinism so very prevalent, when the two first people in the kingdom were the greatest examples of a virtuous life, and purity of manners. Perhaps, despairing to attain to their excellence and perfection, they think it is needless to endeavour at it: ignorant, that every attempt to be virtuous is meritorious. When the ceremony was

was over, and she had retired into the circle, her praise was in every body's mouth, and nothing but the charming stranger could be talked of. My poor heart felt an unusual palpitation: and I was, perhaps, in a more awkward situation than she was. As I could direct my eyes to no part of the room but where she stood, at last she caught my eye,—and changing colour, turned her head hastily another way. The presence-chamber was no longer a place for me to stay in: so I went away as fast as I could, with an aching and desponding heart. All is over, Williams; she will not even bear the sight of me! She is blameless, and acts with propriety: to have looked graciously on me, would have been a sanction that she ought not to have given to my proceedings. My father too will not give me hopes. Tender and pitiful, he dreads, lest the shock may prove fatal to me, and perhaps kill me. But

————— I do deserve to breathe:
 Deserve to bear this load of life about me
 For many years. To lengthen out my age
 Listening the hourly knell of curst remembrance,
 Whose leaden stroke shall tell to my sad soul
 That I was *happy* once.

My hopes are extinct, but my thirst for vengeance remains. No tidings can I get of Withers. Tomkins either knows not, or won't tell me, where he is. He conceals Maria from me too, whom that villain has destroyed. Yet he tells me, with a significant smile, that he does not doubt but I shall hear of him soon. The
 sooner

sooner the better. After punishing him, I will make one attempt to regain Miss Somerton's good opinion: and then, if I fail in it, set off for the continent again. I think I will go to the play to-night. Garrick performs Benedict, it will divert my thoughts for a while.

Farewel Harry,

I am yours,

CHARLES HORTON.

LET-

LETTER LVIII.

To Miss WEBSTER.

THE dreaded ceremony is over, my dear friend. I have been presented to their majesties. My father and my friends applaud my demeanour; but indeed I was shocked at the thoughts of appearing before such an assembly, and awed in the presence of royalty. Were I inclined to be vain, food enough to supply my vanity has been afforded me: but before I left the court, it was all deadened and mortified. After the ceremony was over, and I had recollected myself from the hurry and confusion that attend one who was never used to so much company, casting my eyes about to see if any person of my acquaintance was there, on the opposite side of the room I perceived Mr. Horton. He was so altered, I did not at first know him: but a second view assured me that it was really him.—Well it was for me that I was ignorant of his being there; for I should never have acted with so good a grace, as they tell me I did, if he was to have inspected my behaviour. My father, who, as I thought, was talking to somebody behind me, nevertheless observed that Horton's eye had caught mine. Whether my confusion and concern at seeing him so much altered had any visible effect on my countenance, or no, I cannot tell; but my penetrating father could inform me that we had seen each other; however, he was
no

no more to be found there, and my eye searched after him through the croud in vain. I wanted to be at home to indulge my thoughts; for it was evident, from his behaviour, he only went to court to see me: and the moment he had made it known to me that he was there, he went away. His delicacy pleased me. He thought, very justly, that the sight of him would give me great uneasiness; and as soon as he knew that I was no longer a stranger to his being there, departed, lest he should increase that uneasiness. My situation, when I was at home, was not less distressing: for not being at liberty to speak my sentiments, or ask any questions concerning him, I was obliged to bury in silence my thoughts; and Sir Thomas never even hinted that he had seen his son, though his tranquillity makes me believe that he has; for surely, were he uncertain of his fate, he would not be so easy. In two nights after we went to the play, to see the famous Garrick in the character of Benedict. My father and Sir Thomas Horton were with me, and some ladies, who made the party. The entertainment at first engrossed my attention entirely, as we did not arrive till it was just beginning. In the intervals between the acts, I had an opportunity of throwing my eyes about, and perceived Mr. Horton in a box not far distant from ours. I turned my head another way, and would not look to that side of the house. Several times I endeavoured, nevertheless, to steal a look at him, when I imagined he was engaged in attending to the performance. At last, unperceived by him, I had an opportunity of observing how much he was altered. Ah! Lucy, you would not know him now. He is as pale as death!

death ! His looks want that animation they formerly had, and his eyes have intirely lost their brightness, though not their meaning ; for he seemed to accuse me of treating him unkindly, at the same time that they seemed to acknowledge the justice of that treatment. Were I properly sensible of the indignity offered me, I should not even write or think at all about him, much less both write and think in the tender manner I do.—My father was not an unconcerned spectator of this silent conversation : he watched us both ; for the next morning, after breakfast, he told me, he had something particular to say to me, and would follow me into my dressing-room, desiring me to dismiss my attendants.

“ I have so lately found a daughter in thee, my dearest Juliet,” said he, “ that I know not how to exert the authority of a father : it is not my intention to do it. Throwing aside, then, that submission which your duty would incline you to pay to my commands, let me speak to you as a friend, and one that is most nearly and deeply interested in your future welfare. The world, my dear girl, has seen your charms with admiration. So fair an object of a father’s fondness, is that of adoration to every one else. The consequence of this has been, that several proposals, I may say unexceptionable proposals, have been made to me, concerning the disposal of your hand. No positive answer has been given to any body. It was first necessary to consult your inclinations, which never shall be forced. Among those who will pay their addresses to you, as no restraint has been laid upon their indulging
“ hope,

“ hope, will be lord Morden, a most deserving
“ young nobleman : his moral character is good,
“ and you will be the best judge of his personal
“ qualifications. I do not mean to bias or sway
“ your choice, but to direct it to a proper ob-
“ ject. Though so lately known to be my
“ daughter, and so little as I have had of your
“ society, which is truly dear to me, yet I would
“ forego that pleasure, to see you happily
“ married to a worthy man. There is no state
“ so dangerous as an handsome woman unprotected.”

“ Ah ! sir, am I not protected by you ?”

“ That is nothing,” said he, interrupting me,
“ to the protection of an husband : and it would
“ give me great pleasure to see you make choice
“ of a good one.”

“ You have told me, sir, and I believe it,
“ that you have been acquainted with my story
“ while at Elwood. You know that the heart
“ cannot always disengage itself from an un-
“ fortunate attachment that it may have precipi-
“ tately entered into : and mine is as susceptible
“ as——”

“ What ! Juliet, have you still a tenderness
“ for the man who has treated you so unworthily ?
“ Can you yet think well of him ?”

“ I cannot help it,” said I, bursting into
tears. “ He made that impression on my heart,
“ that will never be intirely erased. Do not
“ blame me, while I confess my weakness to
“ you.”

“ No, my child ; I pity you for having
“ thrown away your affections on so unworthy
“ an object.”

“ It

"It is true, sir, he has injured me: but if we are to believe appearances, he has repented, and suffered for it; and had not Withers taken me away in so base a manner from him, his intentions, with regard to me, would have been more fully explained; and, but for that accident, I should never have had the happiness of knowing you for my father."

"Alas! Juliet, I fear this infatuation is not to be remedied. You love Horton, and you do not deny it: indeed, I have seen it. At court, and in the theatre, when you saw him, your changing colour, and your uneasiness, sufficiently proved it: it did not pass unnoticed by me. I believe, as you do, that he repents having acted as he did by you: and I also believe he loves you. I wish to see you happy, Juliet, and will do every thing to make you so. A woman should be acquainted with the notions and principles of the man who is to be her husband. In Mr. Horton's correspondence with me, when he first saw you at Elwood, he opened his heart intirely to me. You shall see all his letters from that time to this moment. When you have read them, you will be a better judge of his disposition than you could possibly be otherwise, and know more of his temper, and read his heart more truly. If you then retain your present way of thinking, my consent shall not be wanting to make you happy, if you cannot be so in any other manner."

Tears choaked my speech, or I would have thanked him. He proceeded:

"I have

“ I have not time now to look for them ; but
“ to-morrow you shall have them. Make a
“ good use, my dear Juliet, of this indul-
“ gence.”

He left me, and I sat down to make you ac-
quainted with this circumstance. Oh ! how I
long to get at these letters, my dear Lucy. They
will tell me all I want to know. Perhaps my
opinion of Mr. Horton may be altered by them.
At present,

I love th' offender, tho' I hate th' offence.

But these letters may give me the cause of his
offending. I die with impatience to see them :
Till I have read them, you can know nothing
further about me. Something prognosticates that
this affair will have a termination before you
come to town. May it be an happy one for
thy friend,

JULIET SOMMERTON.

LET-

LETTER LIX.

TO CAPTAIN TOMKINS.

I AM ruined! Your friend, George, is undone beyond redemption!—To what unlucky fate am I destined!—But lamentations are in vain.—I am married. Don't mistake me: it is not to Pris. If I can have patience to write it, you shall hear it all. To be deprived of such a prospect of happiness and independance!—madness will seize me. Every thing was in the fairest train too: every thing succeeded to my most sanguine wishes. Priscilla still languished for the hour that was to accomplish our escape, and make us one. Many little plans were formed for our mutual security. Still was I sure of receiving cash from thee on the Monday: and Tuesday—that day will never come!—was to have made me blessed. What scenes of happiness had I painted for myself! What schemes of pleasure had I projected!—On Sunday night we renewed our protestations of never-ceasing fidelity, and met, for the last time, till we went off. About nine o'clock, on Monday morning, a message came for me, from a little town about a mile or something better from Sir Humphry's seat, informing me, that a gentleman, whom I had long expected, was waiting there for me, and desired to see me as soon as possible. It came into my head that it might be you who were there, and had taken the pains to come so far to be a witness of my

my triumph, and partake the honour of the conquest. With that pleasing notion I set out, and soon got to the place where I was informed the gentleman was waiting for me. Being shewn into a room in the inn, the waiter said he would send him up directly. In a few minutes a gentleman, a perfect stranger to me, came into the room. We saluted.

“Your name is Withers?”

“It is.”

“You are the man I want.”

“That may be: but as I never saw you before, apprehend you have mistaken your man, sir. May I crave the favour of your name?”

“Dixon.”

“I never knew one of the name in my life.”

“That is a gross falsehood. You knew a clergyman of that name in a town where you were quartered once, and whose daughter, like an infamous villain, you stole from him, and, by taking away the delight of his old age, shortened his days. That daughter, whose brother I am, you have dishonoured and ruined. There is but one way, one mode of reparation left for all these injuries. You understand me.—By marrying her, and giving her that title in the face of the world, under the pretence of which you have destroyed her. Not but I would have you to know, that were there any other means of restoring her honour, this would be the last I would ever choose.”

“You

“ You talk this extremely well, sir; but
 “ my consent is necessary upon this occasion:
 “ and as I am really engaged to a lady whom I
 “ must marry, you will excuse me for declin-
 “ ing this extraordinary favour you would
 “ force upon me, as my honour is really con-
 “ cerned.”

“ This is a very paltry and insignificant ex-
 “ cuse: and as for your honour, that has been
 “ forfeited so long ago, that you could not engage
 “ it now: but, sir, this was not the purpose for
 “ which I desired to see you; it was to know if
 “ you would do my sister justice. You have re-
 “ fused it: it remains, therefore, to oblige you
 “ to it, or perish in the attempt. Take your
 “ choice of these, sir,” said he, laying two cases
 of pistols on the table. “ When we have dis-
 “ charged these, my brother, who waits on the
 “ outside the door to prevent any interruption,
 “ will supply us with more, till this affair is de-
 “ cided, or one of us falls. If it should be my
 “ lot, he will take my place, and you shall either
 “ extirpate the family, or do all you can to re-
 “ pair the wrongs it has suffered from you. To
 “ your ground, sir.”

And he retired to the other end of the room.
 He gave me the choice, and I fired and mis-
 sed him. His ball went through my hat. I
 paused.

“ Why do you hesitate?” said he.

“ I have done enough to satisfy your demands,
 “ and have sufficiently exposed my life. You can
 “ want no more.”

“ You never can do enough while you live,
 “ and refuse that justice that is my due. May
 “ my heart perish, if ever I cease pursuing you,
 “ till I force you to right that injured girl. Had
 “ I treated you as you deserved, I should not
 “ thus have exposed my own life in this manner.
 “ But make haste ; the people are alarmed, and
 “ we shall be interrupted.”

I still refused to fire, as I had given him what satisfaction I thought necessary.

“ Don’t let me be hanged for murdering you,”
 said he ; “ defend yourself like a man, and do not
 “ add cowardice to villainy.”

At that instant Maria burst into the room,
 alarmed at the report of the pistols ; and throw-
 ing herself at her brother’s feet, in all the agonies
 of fear and despair, besought him to spare her and
 himself.

“ I am not worthy of this regard you shew for
 “ me, and that honour I was incapable of taking
 “ care of myself, it is not fit that you should
 “ spill your blood in defence of.”

“ Maria, you are my sister, my well-beloved
 “ sister ; and though you have deviated from the
 “ paths of virtue, are as dear to me as ever.—
 “ You have been seduced and dishonoured, yet
 “ you are my sister, and I am concerned in
 “ every injury done to you. Your interest is
 “ near to my heart ; and while that beats, I
 “ will defend and promote it. Retire, my dear
 “ Maria : in a few minutes I will be with you
 “ again.”

“ Oh ! my brother, why will you render me
 “ miserable, more wretched than I already am,
 “ by exposing thy precious life ? Mr. Withers,”
 added she, turning to me, “ you once flattered
 “ me

"me that I was dear to you. Will you for ever destroy my peace of mind, by killing my brother?"

"Maria," replied he, "retire; you are acting wrong."

"I can have no weight with my brother," said she, throwing herself on her knees to me; "will you hear me? Ah! throw aside that pistol."

"I never will suffer you," said her brother, snatching her up, "to kneel to that wretch who has undone you. With unremitting hatred will I follow him to the remotest parts of the earth."

No longer able to support the dreadful scene, she fainted in his arms.

"I am sorry this accident," said he, while she was senseless, and could not hear him, "prevents my proceeding in this matter. As soon as she is recovered, I will keep you no longer."

Every symptom and appearance of cool determined courage was evident in Mr. Dixon's manner; and that he would never cease persecuting me, was clear. If he fell, his brother survived, and with him I had an additional resentment to combat. My prospects were all obscured, 'tis true, by marrying Maria; but I might as well submit to my destiny with a good grace, and take my revenge another time. Besides my ruin was certain in the country, and Miss Honiton would soon be informed of the affair.

“ It is my place now to do justice, not so much from the fear of your threats, as the conviction of having behaved amiss,” said I; “ whatever reparation it is in my power to make you, shall be instantly made.”

“ Then,” said Dixon, embracing me, “ you are my brother, and from henceforth my friend.”

His younger brother being called in, we all embraced : on their sides, I am sure, with much sincerity and affection ; but my heart was not so well satisfied. Honest and brave minds are incapable of deceit, and easily imposed upon.—The family was rendered happy, as I made Maria my wife that day, they having provided a special licence. We all set off for their house together ; nor did I take leave, of Sir Humphry Honiton’s family, or the disconsolate Priscilla.—This is the honest account of my destruction ; for I am destroyed. Nevertheless, the Dixons have, from some little property they possess, spared Maria a much larger share than she was intitled to. But this won’t do : and some scheme must be set on foot, to rid me of a wife that has been forced upon me in this manner ; for I neither can or will forgive her brothers. I cannot find out, for the blood of me, how they came to stumble upon me. It must certainly be owing to that treacherous dog of a servant, whom I sent to Maria for some things : he has blown me. Farewel, Tomkins ! I am truly to be pitied. Married to a woman I kept !—Death to my honour !—but she’ll suffer for it.—Horton will lay aside his resentment now, it is to be presumed. But it is immaterial to me whether he does or no : for the man who
blows

blows out my brains now does me a favour, as he will put me out of the way of my wife.— But she shan't have the pension; for I intend to sell out. Once more adieu, till I see you in London, which will be soon: then you may be honoured by an introduction to Mrs. Withers. — Destruction! that ever I should be brought to this!

THOMAS WITHERS.

H 3

LET.

LETTER LX.

To Miss WEBSTER.

I BEGAN to entertain hopes, my dear Lucy, when I wrote to you last, that are threatened to be frustrated by an accident which happened very unexpectedly. Lord L——, after three days illness, departed this life; and my father has acquired a large addition to his fortune, and is now a peer. What alteration this may produce in his sentiments, with regard to Horton and me, I know not; but there is much to be feared. However, he has been so hurried in consequence of my lord's death, that we have had no time to speak about the matter that affects me more than fortune or title. I have read those letters he promised to shew me, and in them was contained an history of Mr. Horton's life. Indeed, Lucy, the character you gave me of him was a true one; and he has been a sad rake. But think what a compliment he pays me: I was to compleat his reformation. If one is to judge from his letters, he loved me very sincerely, and has truly repented of his proceedings in taking me from Elwood. It was an overstrained delicacy of sentiment that induced him to take that step. A man, who has found many women submit to his pleasure, will very readily conclude that all will: This was his case, and he wanted to try the experiment with me. But he had no opportunity, and, if he is to be believed,

lieved, is very well convinced that he would have stood a very bad chance of succeeding. Thus matters are circumstanced. Now, putting my father's authority out of the question, how am I to act in this case? I'll do as all the rest of the world does: first give you my own opinion; or, rather, tell you what I intend to do: and then ask your advice. Were I still Harriet Nicolls, and a dependent upon Sir Thomas Horton, it would require many persuasions, and would be very difficult to make me marry him: then it would be considered as a favour done to me, and a kind of reparation for the injury I had suffered. But the case is altered. By forgiving him, and preferring the interest of my heart to the indulgence of my resentment, I please myself, at the same time I make him my debtor, and lay him under an obligation to me. It is but too true, that he is dear to me, and will be ever so: but though I tell you he is a rake, there are many bright parts that enlighten his character in my eyes so much, perhaps they are partial, that I cannot well perceive the dark ones, or am not willing to do it. However, he is as good, if not better, than most of the young men of this age; and who can expect an husband without faults? The bell rings for dinner. This is a summons must be obeyed.

Oh, Lucy, how have I been terrified since I wrote the former part of this letter! Happily for me, we had no company at dinner to-day; for Sir Thomas is reckoned one of our own family. Soon after we had been seated at table, a messenger wanted to speak to him about the most important business. That he might not be disturbed, the man was ordered to come in. It

was Mr. Horton's favourite servant. He approached Sir Thomas with a frightened look; and, with much concern in his countenance, spoke so low, that I could not hear what it was he said. But Sir Thomas's colour forsook him, and pronouncing the word *killed* with great emphasis, rose hastily from table, and begging my father's excuse, told him, a matter that was of a more interesting nature, required his immediate attendance, but that he would return as soon as possible: and went off directly. What my apprehensions were at that moment, is impossible to tell. Convinced that Mr. Horton was in danger, all my tenderness revived for him, or rather was increased. My father, who was of the same opinion, kept his eyes fixed on me; and seeing me turn pale, asked me what was the matter? but, before I could answer him, had he not caught and supported me in his arms, should have fallen on the floor. When he recovered me a little, he ordered the servants to clear the table, and we were soon by ourselves.

"Ah, Juliet," said he, "it is but too evident that you love Horton more than he deserves. Compose yourself, my dear child; the passion of love is involuntary, and cannot be guided by reason. Your inclination shall not be crossed. It is my duty to make your life as happy as I can. But let me ask you one question. I suppose you have read his letters: what is your opinion of Mr. Horton from them?"

I repeated principally what I had before written to you; and concluded, by throwing myself on my knees before my father; and assuring him, in the most solemn manner, that if it would please

please him, I would relinquish all thoughts of Mr. Horton. He interrupted, and raised me.

“ Juliet! Horton is a worthy young man, and has been led away by his passions: but I believe he sincerely laments the part he acted with you. It will give me pleasure to see you united to him, for I am convinced he truly loves you. When he can see you, consistently with that dignity which injured innocence ought to preserve, and which will punish him the more, as he will be kept longer from your presence, he shall be brought here. His father has informed me of all his proceedings since he has been in town; and my opposition to your inclinations, has only been to try the strength of your affections.”

“ But, Sir, perhaps he is no more. Did not you hear Sir Thomas say he was killed.”

“ Your apprehensions are too lively, my dear child: though, perhaps, he may be in danger, and I will send a servant to inquire after him.”

At that instant Sir Thomas returned; and, on a signal from my father, I retired to my chamber. In what a dreadful state of suspense did I remain. But my indulgent parent did not suffer me to be long so. He came up, and told me that Horton was very safe, and that a few days, would produce a great change in our affairs. It seems his servant, seeing your brother, and Mr. Horton with pistols in their hands, and talking in an high strain—I tremble to think on it—ran as fast as he could to tell Sir Thomas, for his lodgings are not at a great distance. I suppose Mr. Webster came to call him to an account about

me. What trouble has that one deceit cost me. How cautious should we be to adhere to truth and sincerity! It will be a proper warning to me for the rest of my life. Although I have suffered, yet I do not blame you, Lucy; for you did it for the best. Farewell: and believe me your sincere friend,

JULIET SOMMERTON.

LET-

L E T T E L X I.

To Doctor WILLIAMS.

To live, and live a torment to myself,

IS most intolerable : but it is not to be avoided. However, I will not long remain in this situation. My threatened vengeance against Withers is laid aside. He is married to Maria, whom he had basely stolen from her friends, and debauched. Her brother forced him to this act of justice. It is my opinion that Tomkins was concerned in this affair, and told where Withers was. He is a villain to the last : and although he is married to this unhappy girl, who, perhaps, is undeservedly fond of him, he is at this moment laying schemes to get rid of her, and expose her to beggary and distress. That I will take care of, and prevent, should he attempt it. And it is a sufficient punishment for him, according to his notion of things, to be obliged to live with a woman whom he has kept. I will talk of him no more. I was not a little surprized yesterday at a visit from Mr. Webster, whom you have heard me speak of. When he sent up his name, it was sufficient for his introduction. " This is an unexpected favour indeed, Sir : I am very glad to see you. To what happy chance am I indebted for it ? " " Accidentally hearing that you were in town, I came to wait on you."

" You

“ You do me honour, Sir.”

“ Yes, Sir ; but my coming here was on another account. You are no stranger to the respect I entertained for Miss Nicolls, and were a witness to my passion for her.”

“ You never made me acquainted with your secrets, Sir ; and I am no conjurer.”

“ Sir,” said he, growing angry, “ this is but trifling: you have injured that lady ; and, in her, me. You, no doubt, will defend your actions. I am come to demand that satisfaction, which one gentleman should give another for any injury done.”

To be thus accused, and my own heart bearing testimony against me at the same time, was too much. But I was provoked ; and asking him what satisfaction he demanded, suffered my passion to prevail over my reason. He produced pistols. “ Give me one,” said I, “ and retire.” Though stung to the quick by his treatment of me, I abhorred duelling ; and resolved to speak to him coolly, before I was forced to the commission of such a precipitate action. “ I shall not suffer in the opinion of the world, Mr. Webster, if I refuse to take away your life, or give you an opportunity of taking mine: my courage has been already tried in matters of this nature before now. But what will be the consequence of our engaging ? The lady, I fancy, is equally removed from us both. The Miss Nicolls, whom you profess to admire, is now lady Juliet Sommerton, the only daughter of the earl of L——. You fancied you were possessed of her esteem: I am convinced that I was, and perhaps should have retained it, had not I forfeited it by
“ taking

“ taking her away so rashly from Elwood. You
“ have really suffered nothing, but I have a
“ great deal. Now, Sir, pursue your inten-
“ tions.”

“ No,” said he, “ Mr. Horton, your can-
“ dour has removed my suspicions, and matters
“ appeared to me otherwise than they are. I
“ quitted my father’s house in pursuit of you,
“ and have been in quest of you ever since, and
“ never heard of this extraordinary change in
“ her circumstances before; I have now to ask
“ your pardon for this.”

I interrupted, and would not suffer him to pro-
ceed: insisted on his being quite easy; and we
sat down to dinner, which I forced him to par-
take with me, perfectly reconciled. In the
middle of our repast, my father, with a look
of concern and terror, rushed in upon us. That
foolish fellow, Frank, had overheard the
beginning of our conversation, and ran and
alarmed my father, who would not suffer me
to blame him as much as he deserved. As he
was disturbed from dinner, he sat down with
us, and, as soon as he could, went back to lord
L——’s, promising to return in the evening.
Webster soon after departed for the country, as
he had no longer any business in town, declaring
he would give up all pretensions to lady Juliet,
though he could not help loving her; yet it
would be in vain to encourage hope, when she
was placed so far above him. My own case was
but little better; but a trial would put it out of
doubt. If my father could be prevailed upon to
give lord L—— a letter from me, there was the
best chance of succeeding. I began several let-
ters,

ters, and tore them all. At length I completed the following—

“MY LORD,

“Before your accession to the title you at present enjoy, which I sincerely congratulate you on; and before the recovery of your all-accomplished daughter, which has given you more real happiness; there was not a motion or thought of my heart with which you were not acquainted. Nothing was concealed from you: nothing disguised. To you I entrusted all its secrets and wishes. You knew the passion I entertained for Miss Nicolls, and were convinced of its reality. It is true, I have most deservedly forfeited that title which you formerly honoured me with, of being your friend. I fear I have forfeited more. But if penitence, and a just sense of the crime I have committed, can be sufficient to atone for it, I have yet a claim to be restored to your good opinion; nor will lady Juliet, I hope, disdain to receive that submission which is so justly due to the injured and offended Harriet Nicolls. However blameable and worthy of censure those principles and notions might have been, which hurried me into the commission of those actions which I am now truly ashamed of, yet they were the result, the consequences drawn from the practice of my former life. I believe it is needless to say, that I am convinced of their fallacy, and the danger of following them. What I have already suffered, will be sufficient to deter me from entertaining

“tertaining them for the future. Let me, then,
“not be deemed unworthy of being again ad-
“mitted to a share of your confidence and es-
“teem, and having an opportunity of entreat-
“ing forgiveness from your charming daughter,
“for the troubles she met with through my
“means. Not so much on my own, as my
“father’s merit, do I pretend to hope, that you
“will grant this request. I am, with true re-
“spect and sincerity,

“My Lord, &c. &c.”

When my father came to me, as he had promised, in the evening, I shewed him this letter, and entreated him to carry it to lord L—— for me; assuring him, at the same time, that all my happiness depended upon the answer I should receive. He shook his head, and seemed not to doubt of his bad success. However, at my earnest entreaties, he was prevailed on to take the letter. After some little conversation, he left me to my meditations: and here am I, in the most miserable state of suspense and anxiety. Every thing is to be feared; and my heart is so strongly attached to her, that it beats only for lady Juliet. I wish she had been Harriet Nicolls still. There might be a greater chance of success then. Perhaps lord L—— will require a nobler alliance than mine. Doubts distract me: and this need not have been my situation, if I had acted as I ought to have done. There is no recalling the time that is past: if there was, my mind would not now be thus disturbed. A few hours will
determine

determine my fate. To-morrow my father promised to bring me an answer. This night will serve to prepare me for the blow I shall receive: it will not come unexpectedly, and will be the less severely felt. This is a dreadful state. The last post-bell rings, and I must conclude myself thy friend,

CHARLES HORTON.

LET-

L E T T E R L X I I .

To the Same.

HARRY, my dear Harry, it is all over: but I will relate the matter as circumstantially as my throbbing heart will let me. I passed a sleepless, anxious night; got up early in the morning; read the papers; sipped my tea; and in vain endeavoured to amuse myself. So long and tedious a morning never did I experience: expectation stood on tiptoe. From seven till one o'clock was I kept in this situation. At length my father appeared.—“Well, Sir, what is to become of me?” He was silent: and, seating himself by the fire, began to warm his hands. “Your tenderness, Sir, prevents your telling me that I am miserable and rejected; but do not spare me, I deserve it all. Let me know my doom at once.”

“If it was in my power, Charles, I would make you happy at once: but you know it is not.”

“For heaven’s sake, Sir, tell me what I am to expect?”

“This will tell you better than I can.”

Then searching in one pocket, and then in another, and muttering to himself, “Sure I have not left it behind me!” while I stood breathless with hope, fear, and expectation, at last he pulled out a letter.

“Ah! this is it,” said he. “Aye—To Charles Horton, Esq; this must be it—there—that will satisfy your doubts.”

I fancied

I fancied my eyes deceived me when I read as follows:

"I shall defer answering your letter, dear Charles, till I see you. If you are not engaged, I shall expect you at dinner at four: but if you come at two, you may be agreeably entertained till dinner-time. Sir Thomas will shew you the way.

Yours truly,

"L——."

"Is this a deception, dear Sir?" said I. "What an unexpected happiness! For this unbounded generosity and goodness my whole life will be scarcely sufficient to make proper amends. But it is past one now, and I shall not have time to dress."

"You will have time enough, Charles," said he, smiling; "but there is none to lose. I will stay till you are ready. Make haste."

That was a very unnecessary injunction: and I set about dressing myself with all the expedition I was master of myself, or could oblige others to make. When ready, I stepped into my father's chariot, which waited at the door; and, with palpitating heart, accompanied him to lord L——'s. He waited in his library for us.

"With some difficulty I persuaded Charles to come to see your lordship," said my father, laughing.

"It is not to be wondered at, that I should be ashamed of appearing before—"

"Charles," said his lordship, "say no more about the matter; it shall never be remembered"

“bered again; and I am as glad to see you as ever; and” added he, shaking me by the hand, “am very much obliged to you for running away with my daughter, as, by that means, she was restored to me.”

“Do not recall to my remembrance a transaction I would wish eternally to forget, my lord.”

“The title sounds as oddly in your mouth, Charles, as it does in my ears; for I am as yet so unaccustomed to it, that I do not know when people address me. I fancy that Ned Simpson will be better suited to me. But if you have a mind to see Lady Juliet, she is in the drawing-room.”

My countenance changed at the sound of her name; and I looked very small, or rather as if I was going to be hanged.

“That pitiful face will never do to speak to a lady with, Horton; and tho’ she is my daughter, there are not many such girls.”

“I am too sensible of the power of her charms for my happiness, my lord, should she treat me as I deserve.”

“You must try; you must try;” and, taking me by the hand, he led me across a gallery, and opening a door, shoved me in.

At the upper end of a magnificent apartment sat the adorable Lady Juliet. At the end, next the door, stood I: silent, motionless, embarrassed, and confused beyond measure, or power of utterance: when she saw me, she rose. Shame, conscious shame, tied my tongue, and I stood abashed in her presence. She did not speak; and I found I must. As I approached her, she blushed and trembled.

“It

“ It is I, Lady Juliet, who should blush and
“ die with shame at the recollection of what has
“ happened. To say that I repent of it, is
“ saying nothing. I have suffered for it, but not
“ half what I deserve. Your father, once my
“ worthy friend, till, by my folly, I had for-
“ feited his good opinion, has given me per-
“ mission to ask your forgiveness for the wrongs
“ I have done you. That I now do,” said I,
falling on my knees, “ very sincerely : and ne-
“ ver shall be happy, till you give me leave to
“ atone for my transgressions, by convincing
“ you, from a series of virtuous and honest ac-
“ tions, that I detest my former principles and
“ practices ; and to prove to you, that my heart
“ is more than ever devoted to you.”

“ Then you would not have treated me as
“ you did, Mr. Horton : but I beseech you
“ rise. It is not fitting that the son of Sir Thomas
“ Horton should remain in that humble posture
“ before me.”

“ It should be lower, and more humble, if it
“ could express my contrition, or my peni-
“ tence. It was not the want, but the excess, of
“ passion, that drove me to such extremities.
“ You threatened to prefer a rival, whom I
“ dreaded : but you must know, that my heart
“ only beat for you. And if that detested
“ scoundrel Withers had not seduced you from
“ me, ere this, my intentions had been explain-
“ ed to you, and I might have been happy :
“ which, unless you forgive me, I never shall
“ be.”

“ Rise, Sir, I entreat you : you are forgiven
“ by me. My duty teaches me forgiveness, if
“ I hope for pardon myself.”

She

She seated herself upon a sofa as I rose, and, sitting by her, told her, "that criminals, like me, only had need of pardon. But, Lady Juliet, however I may have occasion to congratulate you on this happy change in your circumstances, yet it had been better for the interest of my heart had you still remained Harriet Nicolls. If I could find her tenderness in Lady Juliet Sommerton, I should not despair of pardon."

"You may be mistaken. The offended honour of the defenceless and dependent Harriet, would require more concessions to appease it, than the insulted dignity of Lady Juliet."

"Then it may not be impossible for me," said I, taking her hand, which she struggled gently to disengage, "to be restored to that place in your esteem which I have so unhappily lost. Try me, lovely Lady Juliet, try me. I was once honoured with your good opinion: let me undergo any probation; impose any penance on me; I will bear, without repining, any difficulty or hardship that will serve to evince the sincerity of my passion, or the fidelity of my heart."

"Oh, Mr. Horton, how can I suppose that heart will be faithful to me, that so many others have shared? My father has shewn me all your letters: and what security have I, that you will be constant to me only?"

"Your own charms, adorable Juliet. But if your father has shewn you my letters, though there is a more particular detail of my follies there than I should have wished had met your eyes, yet you must also have perceived, that I had determined to relinquish
" them

“ them all, if I should be so happy as to inspire
“ you with the same passion that burned in my
“ breast. The incredulity which I now am ashamed
“ of, is entirely discarded; and I am a convert to reason and honour. To you were my
“ days to be devoted; and all my care would
“ have been, to make you happy. But now
“ my fate is fixed: and nothing remains for me,
“ but misery and despair. I have earned it for
“ myself: I have deserved it but too much.
“ But had I been as industrious to promote the
“ cause of virtue, as I have vice, you would
“ not now have rejected me. Yet scorn not
“ the penitent, Juliet, my charming Juliet.
“ Though you are not, nor, I fear, ever will be,
“ mine; yet, tell me, have you banished me
“ entirely from your heart?”

She spoke not.

“ I once thought I could boast of being esteemed by you: have you determined to forget
“ me for ever? I will not call you cruel, or
“ hard-hearted, or unjust: you treat me properly. But inform me, is there any method
“ of regaining that place I have lost in your
“ heart?”

“ I am afraid you have too large a share of
“ it.”

“ Good heavens! is it possible? and can you
“ yet think well of me, adorable maid;”

“ Much better than I ought,” said she.

“ Not so: by the holiest powers, I will never
“ wrong your good opinion of me. Restore me
“ to the possession of that heart, and my life shall
“ be too short to shew my gratitude and love.”

“ Alas,” said she, “ Mr. Horton, you are so
“ importunate, I cannot refuse it.”

I could

I could contain no longer, but snatched the blushing maid to my panting enraptured bosom, and took possession of her lips, with a burning kiss, not willingly granted, nor entirely refused. While she was yet retained in my longing arms, Lord L——, and my father, came into the room. My Juliet's face was crimsoned over with a beauteous blush, and she struggled to disengage herself from my embrace.

"Oh, ho! Juliet," said Lord L——, "I find that Horton has not pleaded unsuccessfully."

"I hope not, my Lord. More success has attended my application, than my most sanguine wishes could have promised. With an unexpected goodness, your charming daughter has consented to be reconciled to me. It remains for me, to shew my gratitude and high sense of the obligation conferred on me. And now, my Lord, as hope too often is the parent of presumption, I must make a request to you."

"Let me hear it."

"To confirm this reconciliation, by consenting to our being united."

"Why, I do not know," replied he, but it may be as well to finish this affair at once, now we are about it. What say you, Sir Thomas?"

"I think so," said my father.

"And have you any objection?" added Lord L——, turning to Lady Juliet.

She made him no answer.

"Why that is a tacit method of agreeing to the proposal: silence gives consent."

"It

“It does,” said I, taking her trembling hand, and pressing it to my lips. “And here, lovely Lady Juliet, let us kneel before those authors of our being, and entreat their benediction: to them we owe all our happiness.”

I led her unreluctantly, blushing like the morn, and, retaining her dear hand, the precious pledge of regained affection, we fell on our knees before them. With one accent, one voice, they poured their blessings on us, as we humbled ourselves at their feet.

“May the author of all good things shower down his blessings upon you, my-children!”

And, turning to Sir Thomas, Lord L— embraced him.

“Let the union of our children,” said he, “be the band of our affection. From henceforth we are brothers: and no where could my daughter have been so well bestowed, as on the son of him who has been her protector—her father.”

I had again claimed from Lady Juliet’s lips the earnest of future bliss. My father took her in his arms: and Lord L— embracing me, said, “Horton! to you I give what’s dearer to me than the whole world beside. You are a worthy young man, and have now, convinced by experience, abandoned those principles that would have rendered you unhappy for ever. My giving you my daughter is a sufficient proof of my affection. Treat her as she deserves.”

“That I can never do,” said I, interrupting him; “for what can equal her merit?”

My joy on this blest reverse of fortune was tumultuous, was not to be supported. I rushed out

out of the room, and relieved my heart in shedding tears of rapture. It eased me; and I returned more tranquil into their presence. In a little time, my Juliet's embarrassment, for I can call her mine now, Williams, wore off. We sat down to dinner with much composure. Nevertheless, we were but idle spectators to the feats of our fires, who shewed their pleasure and satisfaction in the goodness of their appetites. After dinner, the affair of the wedding was brought upon the carpet: and, at Juliet's desire, it was put off for a month. I objected against the length of time: but her father joined with her, and I was obliged to submit. Such cloaths and jewels are to be provided, and such equipages prepared, and such settlements made, that it is impossible to tell you half of them. This may be all as well done after as before, in my opinion. But all I can tell you with precision is, that we are to go to Elwood, and Mr. Atkinson is to perform the ceremony. I am now, my dear Harry, as blessed as a man can be. Happy in my friends, and the love of my Juliet, you may assure yourself I am not long absent from her in the day, and have the vanity to think that she prefers my company to any other person's: and this too, I trust, will be the case after the ceremony is performed, as well as now. Let me bear this event with calmness and equanimity. To have bestowed on me, when I so little expected or deserved it; so charming a woman, possessed of the most brilliant exterior qualifications, and the best heart, with an unblemished purity of morals. If you were to see with what ease and affability she supports this new-acquired dignity, you would be ready to adore her. To this, a princely fortune is added,

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ded. Let me moderate my transports: and, in return for those bounties thus profusely showered on me, let me do as much good as I can. It shall be my determination, to wipe the tear from the eye of affliction; to stop the sigh of distress; to relieve oppressed merit; to smooth the bed of helpless age; and training up defenceless youth, make them, at the same time good men and useful citizens. Sick of the follies of the fashionable world, which I have seen too much of, and given into too freely, a more delightful course is prepared for me to run: I enter upon it with pleasure. From hence my pride shall be, to be stiled the good husband, the careful father; tasks which, though difficult, will be sweetened by the lovely partner I shall have to help me to perform them properly. Farewell, Williams: and know, that no lapse of time, or change of circumstances, shall alter me from what I at present am, thy very sincere and affectionate friend,

CHARLES HORTON.

L E T.

LETTER LXIII.

To Miss WEBSTER.

THERE will be a stop put to the pleasure I proposed to myself in seeing you in London, my dearest Lucy. Matters are changed since my last, and, instead of your coming to visit me in town, I shall go down to see you in the country: but then you will have an opportunity of coming to town with me in another character. In short, my father, and Sir Thomas, and Mr. Horton, are so pressing, that they will not be refused; and the latter end of next week we are all to set out for Elwood, and your poor Juliet is to be married. Heigh ho! Lucy; there's a word for you! but it is even so, and I must submit with a good grace. There is no occasion, since you know this part of the story, to tell you, that we are reconciled, and every thing that has passed drowned in oblivion. Mr. Horton discovers more good qualities every day, than ever I perceived in him before: or, it may be, that I take more notice of them now.

To speak the truth, I fear, when he becomes my husband, he will be spoiled: for my heart is strangely altered. He is with me every day, and every hour of the day; and shews so much bewitching tenderness, he is quite intolerable: he flatters me so much, and says so many fine things to me that I do not deserve, that he will entirely ruin me. You have heard of this wedding that is to be, no doubt; and all the country will be

in arms about it. Well, we shall give an holiday to the poor people, as I heard Sir Thomas talk of an ox to be roasted, and furnish talk for all the tea-tables about, for a month to come. But, Lucy, I insist upon it, that you assist at this pompous affair. I wish it was over. But don't trouble yourself in making any preparations: give me leave to do it for you. My milliner is making up two suits of linen, which you will permit me to present to you: and there is the prettiest silk, you'll be in love with it when you see it, which I have had a sack made of for you. You know your gowns fit me, only a little too short: so that I will take all the trouble off your hands. I have not a moment to myself in the day: there is this thing to be tried, and that to be fitted. Oh! here's Mr. Horton: he desires to be admitted. He must be let in; I can refuse him nothing now.

"What, writing, lady Juliet?"

"Yes, and I hope you don't presume upon your privilege, to want to see what I am writing, already?"

"No indeed, nor ever shall arrogate that privilege."

"Then I'll shew you some part of what I am writing."

"Sweet condescension!" said he.

So, reading the latter part of the letter, "now, how shall I reward you for this goodness?"

"I want none, if you are pleased."

"I am transported: but you must reward me, by granting me a favour."

"I don't know but I may, if it is not very unreasonable: I am in a complying mood this morning."

"It

“ It is only to wear these trifles for my sake.” And pulling a case from his pocket, presented it to me.

“ Lord, what’s here?” said I, opening it.— What do you think, Lucy? a most elegant set of diamonds. But nothing pleases me more than the egrette: ’Tis a bunch of flowers, and every leaf, every flower, trembles and casts a glittering ray if you stir it ever so gently. They are all set in the nicest taste. He inspected them himself, he says; and I never saw any thing so pretty.— “ Thank ye Sir,” said I, dropping a slight curtsy.

“ Juliet, will you give me a kiss for them, which is worth them all to me?”

He did not stay for an answer.

“ Well,” said I, looking at them, “ I never saw any thing so brilliant as these are.”

“ But I have,” said he, “ and much brighter.”

“ Where?”

“ Your eyes.”

“ Fish!” But I must finish my letter, and can’t be disturbed. He has sent Jenny to tell me he is waiting, I can’t stay to say any more, than that I am, your sincere friend,

JULIET SOMMERTON.

LET-

LETTER LXIV.

To Doctor WILLIAMS.

WHAT would the pretended wits of this age say to a man, who had been ten months married, and has not yet repented: it is my case, let them laugh as they will. Lady Juliet and I propose, when the year is up, to go to Dunmow to claim the flitch of bacon: no couple ever deserved it better, we are all a family of love: all united by one band. Lord L—— will never quit us while he lives. He grows fonder of us every day, and seems to expect the minute that will make him a grandfather, with more impatience, than poor Juliet, who is now very unwiieldy. If it should be a son, he will, by his grandfather's interest, succeed to his title, after his death. Sally Cooper is now married to the Mr. Cooke, whom Juliet was much indebted to when she escaped from Withers. They were here to pay us a visit some time since. But why am I always to importune you and Mrs. Williams in vain, to come and see us? comply with our joint request. I have had the honour lately to be elected a knight for this shire, in the room of my father, who has declined serving any longer. It was the voluntary act of the gentlemen and freeholders. I shall soon go up to take my seat, and shall endeavour to act as uprightly

rightly as I can in my duty: neither the slave of a minister, nor the tool of a party, I will, if possible, preserve a mediocrity seldom attainable. The good of my country, to the best of my understanding, shall be the rule of all my actions. Wedlock has a thousand charms for me, that I never supposed was to be found in it. But making me truly happy, I have a right to praise it. Nothing more is wanting to complete my felicity, if the Almighty continues those good things to me which he has graciously conferred on me.

Yours ever,

Elwood.

CHARLES HORTON.

F I N I S.

...the good of my country to the best of my
 understanding, I shall be glad to do so, and I
 have no objection to the use of my name in
 connection with the same. I am, Sir,
 very respectfully,
 Your obedient servant,
 J. W. V. R.



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